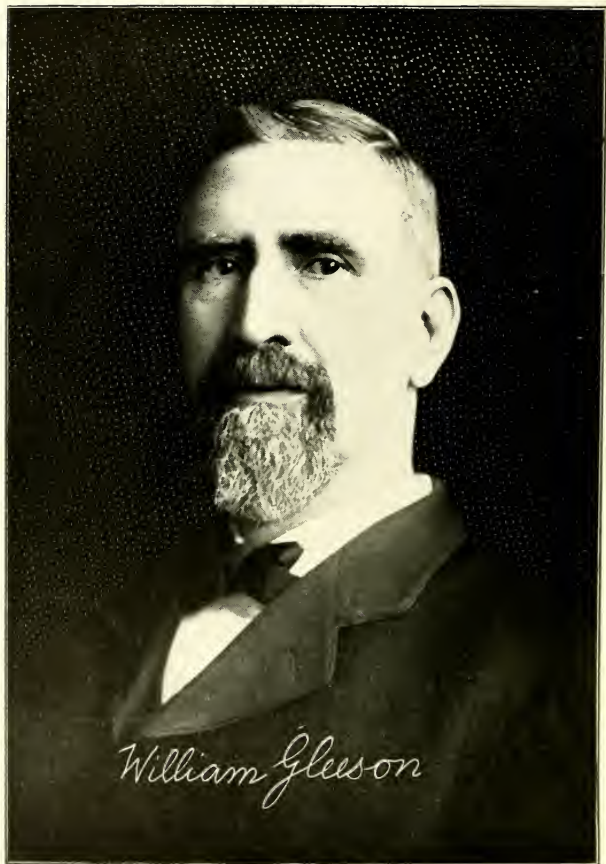


Can Such Things Be?

*The Story of
A White Slave*



By
WILLIAM GLEESON



CAN SUCH THINGS BE?

A STORY
OF A WHITE SLAVE



By
WILLIAM GLEESON

Chicago, Illinois, November 1st, 1915.

Moved by the generous approval the Story of "VICE AND VIRTUE" has received from its numerous readers, and at the solicitation of a number of them, the Author of that story has been induced to make another attempt, and place before the reading public a work dealing with a subject of grave moment to the social, moral, and legal welfare of the citizens the world over: the extensive barter and sale of women and girls for immoral purposes seeming to have no geographical limitations.

As has been proven in our public courts, agencies in New York and others of the large cities of our country have so commercialized the traffic, that they have sub-agencies in every quarter of the globe.

The Story of "CAN SUCH THINGS BE?—THE STORY OF A WHITE SLAVE," deals with a local phase of the subject, how girls are first trapped, and then degraded until they become so despondent, or so callous, as to care not what becomes of them.

The Author, fully alive to the delicacy of dealing with such a subject, has kept well within matters of common knowledge, and at the same time tells a story that may interest, entertain, and arouse the sympathy of his readers for the unfortunate victims, and resentment against their betrayers.

Hoping I have not failed in my object, I am,
Very sincerely yours,

WILLIAM GLEESON.
518 SO. MORGAN ST.

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AUTHOR OF

“Vice and Virtue”

“A National Highway”

“Sunshine and Shadow”

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PREFACE

There are two social problems at the present time to which the thinking people of this country are giving considerable attention:

One, the effects of **alcoholism** on the community; the other, distinctively a moral one, namely **prostitution**, and the methods practiced in propagating it and furnishing what might be designated the raw material.

Many books have been written on this latter subject, especially on the vilest of all methods, that of the decoys—the cadets as they are now named—who in the pursuit of victims for the White Slave traffic resort to every method within the conscienceless ingenuity of demons.

That no adequate punishment commensurate with the crime has been allotted on conviction, even in the most aggravated cases, is the opinion of the author, who in this story provides a fitting penalty for the guilty parties as far as the avenger could reach them.

It is the aim of the author to show the manner by which experts in the profession first secure their victims and the helplessness of those once secure in the toils.

Many of my readers may say that the episode I try to portray is an exaggerated case, but when we come to consider that statisticians assert that 50,000 girls are either lost, stolen or strayed annually in America, and after once lost few are ever regained, and that it takes 5,000 victims in Chicago alone to provide for the wants of commercialized vice, the history of Martha Hill cannot be claimed as exceptional.

The story of "Vice and Virtue," written by the same author, was widely commented on, and served the purpose intended, to expose and hold up for condemnation the tough saloon, the grafting politician, and, above all, the dangers that beset girls in attending dances organized by hoodlums, who had special permits from the authorities to sell liquor to the youths of both sexes indiscriminately until three in the morning, so that the men with evil intent in numerous cases found ready victims for their brutal desires, who inveigled the innocent girls into the all night saloons which abounded in close proximity to the dance halls, where wine rooms furnished ample opportunities for outrages to be committed.

The reading of "Vice and Virtue" by many hundreds of Chicago's leading citizens, both lay and clerical, has had its effect; and the authorities, awake to the dangers attending such functions, are more careful in granting permits. In lieu thereof they have organized municipal dances where the youth of our city may indulge in terpsichorean enjoyment under proper control, and where no intoxicating stimulants will be permitted.

In dealing with the subject of Vice, the difficulty confronts the author of how specific he can be without overstepping the bounds of prudence, which, if done, may give offense to sensitive readers, or excite the morbid interest of those having not sufficient judgment to appreciate the fact that the tale told is for the purpose of arousing the wrath of all well-meaning persons against the scoundrels who profit by the traffic in women.

In the many works published in reference to the White Slave traffic there is a uniformity of information, and in some are suggested remedies, but still the crime goes on. In most of the books on the subject appear extracts from let-

ters and speeches of eminent divines, social reformers and public officials, all of a stereotyped character, leaving no lasting impression after being read. It is the aim of the author of this story to so impress his readers that he or she will ever remember not only the events portrayed but also the leading characters, good and evil, in this doleful tragedy of outraged innocence and also the punishment dealt to those responsible for the crime. If he succeeds in doing this, his labor cannot be said to be in vain.

The author in many parts of this work substitutes the ancient for the modern terms, as for instance: the home of the prostitute was formerly designated a brothel, now it is a sporting house, and the inmates now termed sporting women were once known by a much harsher term, while the pimp is now occasionally called a manager, and lives on the wages of sin, and the white slaver is known by his professional associates as a cadet.

Why this change in nomenclature is hard to explain, unless it be to give an air of respectability to the habitues of the underworld.

Those very sensitive people who condemn an exposure of vicious methods, and who never do more than whisper their opinions of such matters to very close associates, we advise not to read the story "Can Such Things Be?" But of all who wish to buckle on their armor for the suppression of the worst of crimes, the barter and sale of the bodies and souls of the daughters of men, I earnestly solicit the patronage and support.

Respectfully submitted,

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMIGRANTS.

SOME twenty years before the active events took place, which it is the aim of the author to chronicle, two men with their wives settled in the town of B——, Michigan. Both had recently arrived from the old country. Robert Hill, the first to come, was from the north of Ireland — either the town of Belfast or Newry, we forget which.

Hill was a Presbyterian in religion, but not a bigot. He claimed that every man or woman had the right to worship at the shrine which, in his or her opinion, was the safest and surest way to salvation.

Those views which he held and was ever ready to defend were not over-popular with many of his co-religionists in the town he came from; so his advocacy of them created for him some enmity.

Refusing to become a member of the Royal Orange Lodge, even his loyalty was questioned, and he was oftentimes badgered even by those somewhat friendly to him, as it was considered both bad judgment and bad taste on his part not to join a society, to which it was claimed all who were respectable and loyal to the Queen and Constitution owed membership.

As the 12th day of July approached each year, increased efforts were made to add to the membership in the Royal Orange Lodge, so that the annual parade might be as imposing as possible.

The persistency with which one of the over-zealous

solicitors in pursuit of members pestered him, on one occasion, caused him to lose his temper—so much so that he told him he had no earthly use for the society; that the majority of the members were nothing but rowdies; that the organization was subsidized and maintained for the purpose of keeping the people of Ireland divided in the interests of a landed aristocracy, the most of whom were aliens, with no interest in the country except for the opportunities it gave to rack-rent their tenants. And that, further, the English garrison in Ireland encouraged the Orangemen who were a menace to the peace and good-will of the Irish people on account of political exigencies.

Those remarks of Hill were duly reported at the next meeting of the lodge. The followers of the glorious, pious, and immortal William were dumfounded. It was voted that he was a rebel to Queen and country—yes, even to the religion of his sires; that he was hopelessly lost; a papist in disguise, and that no further effort should be made to reclaim him, and that in the future no decent man, who had any respect for his character, should commune with him.

Ever after, when the annual parade was organized to show the papists that religious liberty had still its champions and that the memory of the man who robbed his father-in-law of his crown was still green and that it would be just as well for every Roman to keep indoors at least for that occasion, they marched with their bands playing “Croppy Lie Down,” “The Boyne Water,” and other patriotic airs.

Robert Hill’s home lay on the line of march. In passing his residence the buglers seemed to blow a more vicious blast, while the man with the big drum laid on with increased might to keep up with the rallying cry “To Hell with the Pope”. Many of the paraders glanced up at the

little home of the Hills', where the blinds were closely drawn, others gave vent to their outraged feelings by groans, while some of the young urchins, who kept in line with the marchers, would hurl a stone at the door or windows while passing. Some of the more staid members of the parade would remonstrate with the youngsters in a mild kind of way, others would roar with laughter, as they heard the glass crash to the pavement. "Good enough for him," was the comment of many.

After one of those occasions, when an extra display of ill feeling had been shown toward him by his fellow-countrymen and co-religionists, he resolved to leave his native heath and seek in other lands that peace and prosperity denied him in his own.

Before leaving, he took unto himself a wife, the girl of his choice, who believed, as did Rebecca of Old, that his God was her God, that his people were her people, and that, wherever he would go, she would go. So she left home and kindred to accompany and cheer the man she sincerely loved with all her heart and soul.

Martha, his wife, was a farmer's daughter; so their original intention on arriving in America was to settle on the land. They had heard that the state of Michigan gave ample opportunities to settlers, so they made their way to the town of B——, then a growing community with an abundance of virgin soil close to its outskirts, waiting for those who desired to till it.

Hill had no trade, but was what might be called a handy man, his principal forte that of carpenter. So, while looking around for a suitable quarter section to locate on, was offered a job to assist in the construction of a barn. The man who employed him had less skill than had Hill, whose natural ability and untiring industry raised him con-

siderably in the estimation of his employer, so that, ere he was through with his first job, others who had similar work to do sought his services.

Barns and corneribs had to be constructed, sidewalks laid, the farmers in the outskirts of B—— were generous and not overhard to please. What they wanted was a good substantial structure, one that would resist the winds, which were sometimes especially violent in that part of the country, and oft played havoc with the frail structures that the farmers themselves put up on account of scarcity of builders.

The people of the village, about the time of Hill's arrival, were clamoring for local improvements, so Hill was besieged to lay sidewalks. In fact, his great difficulty was in meeting the many demands on his services. True, wages in those days were not high, but the cost of provisions was so low that his income was out of all proportion to what he had been receiving in the town and country from whence he came.

In a brief time Hill was a welcome acquisition to the town of B——, and many's the time the farmers, driving past the little cottage Hill had rented, would pull up their horses and, after asking Mrs. Hill if Robert was in, which was seldom the case between sunrise and sunset, would throw from the wagon a bag of potatoes, a dozen heads of cabbage or a quantity of whatever vegetables or fruit was in season and then drive on with the cheery parting, "Tell Robert I called. Good day, Mrs. Hill." She thanking him as he smiled and went on his way.

The original idea of settling on the land for the time being had to be deferred; but Hill, knowing the leaning of his wife for a farm, decided on a compromise. He would secure a lot as soon as the rush of work was over, and build

himself a cottage. There was no scarcity of building sites in town. One corner in particular he had his eye on. He had done some work for the owner; so one day Hill approached him as to the price which he thought was reasonable. Hill, with some misgivings, said: "I haven't that much money." "I have not asked you for any yet, have I?" said the owner. Robert's mind reverted to the difficulties of securing a little tract of land in Ireland, no matter how barren.

"I suppose you're going to build yourself a cottage?" queried the real estate man.

"Yes, sir. When I have time and a little more money."

"Well, when you are ready, go down to Jones, the lumber man, and tell him I sent you, and, if he wants to know anything about your credit, tell him to come and see me."

That evening Hill told his wife of the conversation he had with the real estate man. She listened till the tears of joy welled up in her eyes, and in her heartfelt gratitude she invoked God's blessing on the landowner, instead of curses, as she had often heard her father give vent to against the rackrenting steward who acted as agent for the alien landlord, who owned the land from whom her father rented and had to till to obtain a paltry living, and was afraid to show any sign of prosperity for fear of having his rent raised.

Matthew Howard, the other party referred to, and his young wife arrived in the town of B—— some three months after the Hills. Howard was an Englishman, who had conducted a small haberdashery in one of the small towns in Lancashire. He was only recently married, when he and his wife decided to sell their business and leave for America, of which he had heard such glowing accounts.

When he had sold the good will of his shop, with its stock and fixtures, settling up his outstanding accounts with all his creditors, making some purchases of goods that they would need on the train and ship, and secured the necessary tickets for himself and wife, he had close upon three hundred pounds left.

After arriving in New York and looking around its busy, bustling center, he came to the conclusion that the few hundred dollars he had, after exchanging English sovereigns for American dollars, would not go far in establishing a business in New York. This opinion was intensified when he inquired into the annual rental of some of the city's stores.

Besides, at the time he arrived, Horace Greeley's advice, "Go west and grow up with the country," was a topic of conversation and an advice thousands were following. Howard determined to do likewise, so he decided to try Michigan—how he made the selection was never clear to him. Years after, when he had become a prosperous business man, he attributed it to his good luck.

Howard and his wife ultimately found themselves in the town of B—. He claimed to have liked it from the first. Being of a social disposition, he held converse with many of the natives who, one and all, proclaimed it to be the coming town, and when he told them he had a notion to settle down among them, there was a general acclaim: "You couldn't do better."

So he sought himself a store, determined to follow the line he was familiar with, the only change being in name from "haberdashery" to "gentlemen's furnishings," with women's wear as a side line.

Having found a suitable location, signed a lease, and paid a month's rent in advance, something he had never

done before, the landlord from whom he rented agreed to put the place in necessary repairs, which he did to Howard's satisfaction. This being done, he went in quest of a carpenter to make a counter, necessary cases and shelving on which to place his stock.

This led him to make Hill's acquaintance. Howard gave Hill instructions as to what he wanted done. Hill gave him an estimate, at the same time putting in the proviso, "It may cost a dollar or two more."

"Go ahead," was Howard's reply offhand, typical of his nationality, which boasts of the squarest and fairest business men in the world and who do less huxtering than do the people in any part of the habitable globe.

During the time Hill was on the job he and Howard became very well acquainted. Hill surprised Howard when he told him that he also was a comparative stranger, having arrived only three months ahead of him.

"Is that so? Well, how does your wife like it?" inquired Howard.

"At first she felt very lonesome, but never complained, and now, as I am doing fairly well, she is a good deal more cheerful."

"You will have to introduce her to my wife, as I am afraid Mrs. Howard is in for a spell of homesickness."

Hill promised he would, at the earliest opportunity. So the women met one evening at Hill's, had a friendly chat about their long journey, their hopes in the future, and so became fast friends, as did their husbands—two men in a strange land with much in common.

In the fall of the year, when Hill had satisfied the pressing demands of his customers, he decided to make the necessary preparation to build his cottage. His lot was but one block from the main street, situated on a corner, its dimen-

sions one hundred by a hundred and fifty, running to an alley in the rear. His friend, Howard, in inspecting it, said it was an ideal spot, and proffered a little assistance, for which Hill thanked him, but said it was not necessary, as he could get all the lumber he wanted on time—which was true—as all material for the work he had done since coming to B—— had been purchased from the one firm, whose proprietor had a high appreciation of Hill as an energetic, industrious man, whose honesty he felt assured of, and thus had more reliable data as to Hill's credit as a risk than could Dun's or Bradstreet's special agents be likely to learn after careful inquiry.

Hill's cottage when built was more substantial than artistic, sufficiently back from the street to leave room for a more imposing front to the four rooms completed, when circumstances would permit.

The day Hill moved in, Mr. and Mrs. Howard came over as soon as they had closed their store, and spent the evening with them as a kind of house-warming.

Howard and Hill talked business over their pipes, and infused courage into one another by their optimism; while their partners adjourned to another room and interchanged views about things in general and probably about their neighbors in particular, and matters of a delicate character that brought joy and anxiety at the same time to both.

In the rear of Hill's cottage he had laid out a garden on which he worked during his spare hours, assisted by his wife, whose early experience on her father's farm gave her an advantage.

Hill placed a neat fence in front of his cottage on which he displayed some taste, and fenced around the entire lot so as to keep stray cows, pigs and horses out, whose right to graze on the adjoining prairie was common to all at this

time. He built a coop for chickens, and in a short time put up a sty, and purchased a couple of young pigs from a farmer for whom he was doing some work, at the same time securing a Milch cow, which he took as part payment.

Mrs. Hill began to think it was very much like home, minus the poverty. Her heart rejoiced. She could not think of anything more she wanted, except the safe arrival of a little stranger that might be expected in the near future. When he did come, Mrs. Howard was in attendance as chief nurse.

This event consummated the happiness of the Hills. A father's love for his first-born has no bounds, nor has a mother's idolatry for her baby boy any limit.

The doctor pronounced the youngster in every way externally perfect, and the squall he gave vent to while receiving his first bath on the knee of a neighboring woman, who had come in to lend a hand, left no room for doubt that his little lungs were in excellent working order.

The newly-arrived was christened, in due time, "Robert," after his father. Mr. and Mrs. Howard stood sponsors for him.

The Hills at this time may be said to have had solid comfort—Mr. Hill had plenty of work, the wife of his bosom, his baby boy, and a comfortable home. He was as happy as a king. Yes, a great deal happier than the majority of kings; for if he, Robert Hill, had a care in the world, he didn't know it.

CHAPTER II.

COMRADES.

It was hardly two months after the birth of young Robert when Mrs. Hill got a hasty summons to come over to Mrs. Howard's—there was something doing.

Mrs. Hill ran into a neighbor's with young Bob on her arm, and asked the mistress of the house to take care of him for awhile as she was going over to Martha's, who she guessed was in trouble. The woman took charge of the child cheerfully, who was little trouble, having recently gorged himself from the parent fount.

Mrs. Hill arrived at the Howard homestead out of breath, and with her willing heart and recent experience installed herself as head nurse and general assistant to the doctor who had already arrived.

In about three hours she returned to take charge of her own boy, who had slept the entire time during her absence.

"Well, how are things over at Howard's?" inquired the woman who had taken charge of young Hill.

"Splendid. Mrs. Howard has a fine boy, and both she and the child are doing well. The doctor says there is no trouble at all, but I am going back as soon as my husband comes home and I give him his supper."

Hill and Howard were of good old country stock. While their wives were youthful, dutiful, and fruitful, their husbands more than probably thought them beautiful. They were good women and good wives, and good helpmates, and that covers every necessary qualification.



THE AGE OF INNOCENCE



Martha Hill, the unfortunate victim of this very sad story, arrived fifteen months after Robert Hill junior. Rachel Howard a few weeks after Martha Hill. Before Robert Hill junior was six years old he had two sisters and a brother, and, as if it had to be, before Matt Howard junior was six had a brother and two sisters.

The children of both families grew up together. Bobby Hill, or his sister Martha, would demand a piece of bread and butter at the Howard house, and get it as cheerfully as at their own; while the young Howards would make a raid on Hill's peach or cherry trees just as if they owned them. Mrs. Hill's only anxiety being, the children would eat too much of the luscious fruit and make themselves sick.

Bobbie Hill and Mattie Howard were constant companions, as were their little sisters. Boys, like ducks, are fond of the water. Bob and Matt would go to the creek to swim, or near swim, probably oftener than they told their parents. Martha and Rachel would follow them and witness the wonderful feats of splashing and diving performed by the two boys. Little sisters have an exalted idea of their brothers' prowess, though they may be but a year or two older than they. When the boys came out of the water they might have to tell their sisters to get off their clothes. Young Miss Hill, in a spirit of mischief, might give young Howard a slap—a little below where he would wear his belt if he had one. Young Miss Howard, entering into the spirit of the fun, would give young Hill a slap, and then both the little girls run for it, the boys either pursuing them or threatening what they would do when they caught them.

But their wrath never lasted much after they had their trousers on, and the four youngsters would start for home, and on the way pick wild flowers or blackberries, or do anything that struck their childish fancy.

The time arrived, however, when Bob and Matt had to go to school, a great hardship to the youngster with the savage's inclination to roam at large. Their sisters following them a year later, they were still constant companions.

That idea inherent in the savage, who looks upon the female as an inferior being over whom he can lord, often showed up in the boys when they would compel their sisters to take their books and slates home while they rushed off to the creek to take their daily swim.

Occasionally the girls would follow their brothers, and would throw tufts of grass or sod at them, or harder missiles into close proximity to the young bathers for the purpose of showing their resentment by splashing and trying to irritate them at the same time.

One very warm day after the boys had been to school for a couple of years, they ordered the girls home with their books and slates which, added to those of the girls, made a considerable parcel, and led them to make a mild protest, but to no avail.

Robert and Matt raced for the creek to take their daily plunge. After a time their sisters came strolling along, arm in arm. They looked at the boys' sunburned bodies in the water as they had done hundreds of times before, but noticed an innovation. Each of the youngsters had on a little pair of drawers. Young Howard had found them in his father's stock, and preempted a pair for himself and a pair for his friend Hill, without a single thought as to their purpose, but of being in line with young men of more mature growth who, they had noticed, wore such things while bathing.

The girls, on noticing the change, walked away, whispering to one another. Probably they were not well up in biblical history, and so not conversant with the wonderful change brought about by the eating of an apple by our

first parents. But their eyes were opened. They felt the influence of the tree of knowledge, though it had withered in the garden of Eden thousands of years before.

And, while much more reserve was displayed in the future than in the past, they were still sisters and brothers, neither of the boys making much distinction, up to this time having not reached the age when a fellow thinks more of another fellow's sister than he does of his own.

When the two young gentlemen aforementioned "~~were~~ hobeldy-hoyes," that is, between men and boys, Martha Hill would spend an occasional evening at the Howards' when her friend Rachel would prevail upon her to stay all night and sleep with her. The bedrooms were on the second floor. Matthew at this time used to help his father in the store, and, being a fine, healthy youngster, bedtime found him both tired and sleepy. So as soon as his head struck the pillow he was dead to the world.

The girls, bent on mischief, would get up in their night gowns, each armed with a pillow, and would steal silently along the passage to Matt's room and opening his door and seeing him asleep would hurl their pillows at his head. If their aim was accurate, he would wake with a start, jump up, and make a bluff as to following them in his night shirt, which if he wore one at all was much shorter than those worn by the girls, who would scamper away and close the door of their room as if in deadly fear of his following them.

This was great fun for the girls, who would laugh at his discomfiture. Sometimes when they were extra persistent, as a last resort he would get up and, pulling on his trousers, take one of the pillows they had hurled at him, go to their room and souse them both good and plenty, the girls squirming and performing remarkable contortions in their efforts to cover both their heads and their legs at the same time, while he flailed them both indiscriminately. .

The girls ultimately supplicating for mercy. "Now will you be good?" he would say to them, and they both promising they would he would retire to his own room, taking the precaution to barricade his door for fear the treaty of peace would be violated, roll into bed and soon be sleeping the sleep of the innocent.

The next morning at the breakfast table the battle of the previous night would be the subject of discourse, he telling of the trouncing he had to give the two girls to make them behave themselves. His father and mother would smile at the recital, while the younger members would laugh with merriment, as they listened to the details of the pillow combat.

The girls denying he gave half as much as he got and his sister threatening to get even with him the first night Martha came over to stay with her.

Bob Hill used to delight to hear his sister Martha's version of what she and Rachel had done to Matt, and it was just as enjoyable to hear Matt tell what he had done to Martha and Rachel, Bob's only regret being that he wasn't there to help out his friend and companion, claiming 'twas hardly fair for both of them to jump on Matt at the same time. "If I had been there, we would have given it to you both good and plenty."

Such was the early life and times of the leading characters in this dismal story of frightful wrong.

CHAPTER III.

JOY AND SORROW.

Matthew Howard, Sr., like most of his countrymen, had little choice between the multiplicity of Protestant persuasions.

He supposed he was an Episcopalian, but if he was asked to define the difference between that faith and that of the Methodists, Baptists or Presbyterians, he would give it up.

As for Hill, his early experience with some of the Presbyterians he had known made him not over-friendly to them. He had in mind some of the rabid sermons of some of their preachers on the eve of the glorious 12th, as they designated it. He, however, never bothered himself about religious observances. On Sunday morning he preferred a rest after his hard week's work, leaving his good wife to attend to church matters and the proper training of his children; his share being a liberal contribution for the maintenance of the church, and the doing of little jobs for the pastor, a man for whom he had great respect.

The elder Howard preferred to look over his books on Sunday morning, or going over to Hill's to gossip with his friend. In the summer time they sat out in the garden under the vines, where Hill had made a little arbor, the shade from which, added to the scent from the flowers, made it an ideal retreat. Howard, like his fellow countrymen, liked his glass of ale, so both of the old chums would light their pipes, fill

their steins, and discuss whatever matters were uppermost in their minds.

Mrs. Howard was a pillar of the church, her financial condition enabling her to be its most liberal supporter.

Both families attended the Reformed Evangelical Church. The girls, Martha Hill and Rachel Howard, sang in the choir.

Martha Hill had a rich soprano voice, and was probably as great an attraction as was the pastor. She was ever willing to lend her aid for any charitable or social entertainment that frequently took place in the town of B—— or neighboring villages, so her services were frequently sought.

Her willingness to serve whenever occasion permitted made her extremely popular with all who knew her, especially with the young men who envied Matt Howard, who seemed to have a prior claim on her and whose proud privilege it was to escort her home every Sunday after church service. Robert Hill did as much for Rachel Howard, leaving their mothers with the younger branches of both families, to gossip with the members of the congregation, and find their way home at their leisure.

Martha Hill, when eighteen years old, was considered as handsome a girl as could be found in Michigan. Her form was slight, her hair a dark brown, ever tastily arranged. She had dark eyes, and a face which would have served an artist as a model for painting a picture of the Madonna.

Matthew Howard felt a pride in walking by her side. He had never spoken of love to her, having grown up from childhood together. He felt for her a brotherly affection, though gossip said that the time would come when they would be bound by a link more binding, and so it was understood.

He was, however, only a big boy and she a modest, un-

assuming girl who knew her place. True, if Matt Howard had said, "Martha, I want you to be my wife," she would have said "Yes" as a matter of course. But they were both young and there was plenty of time.

Robert Hill, Sr., had been suffering from rheumatic pains for some time, which incapacitated him for doing much work. At length a severe attack assailed him, he was confined to his bed, and lay for months. When able to get up, he was comparatively a cripple, his hands having suffered severely.

Robert, Jr., worked in the mill as assistant engineer, but his pay was small, as there was no union in that town to boost wages, and farmers' sons were ever ready to take the place of any man who gave up his job, frequently at a reduced salary. William, his brother, also worked in the mill. He had just turned thirteen, and received but seven dollars a month for his services, hardly enough to furnish him shoes and clothes. There were five other children to be provided for, so the financial condition of the Hills began to be precarious. The little money they had saved in better times, ere a year was over, had been spent in maintenance, doctor's fees and medicine.

The Howards would see they wanted for nothing, but the Hills were proud and, as both families had been for many years on a basis of equality, the Hills hated to take the role of dependants.

Mrs. Hill, a good frugal woman, determined to make the little money the two boys brought in and the revenue from her garden suffice until better times.

Martha Hill was just bordering on nineteen when she determined to go to work. There was no employment for her in the town of B——. Besides, she was known to all, where she had long held a position of equality with the

best people, and so was reluctant to take a menial place even if one was offered in a community where she was known to all. So she read the ads in the Chicago papers, which stated that girls were wanted in nearly every branch of industry, and in some cases salaries mentioned that seemed liberal to her. She figured, if she could but obtain one of them, the material aid she could give her parents to help them in the maintenance of the family now sorely pinched.

Mr. and Mrs. Hill, old-fashioned people, were not over-particular as to their own raiment, but when they were prosperous their Martha should have the best their means could provide or her taste require. So that, at church or social, she was dressed as well, and in as good taste, as any other young lady in the assemblage. Her companion, Rachel Howard, through the financial condition of her parents, was dressed so becomingly that the two girls were recognized as the belles of the town. Both, however, were sensible girls, never put on any airs, and so excited no jealousies, but were loved and admired by all.

Now that the Hills' circumstances had undergone a change, Martha had to forego much of the finery she was accustomed to, till at length she began to feel shabby and out of place amongst her former associates who, like the Howard girls, could afford to dress well.

Matt Howard never noticed the change. She was the same to him, no matter how she was attired, but many of the young women did. Martha's sensitive disposition could not fail but notice it. Martha began to avoid them as much as possible. A regular attendant at church when service was over, she began to plead excuses for going home alone; Matt Howard's attempt to escort her being met with the statement, "I must hurry home. Father is not very well today and I must help mother to prepare dinner," or some

other equally valid, if not absolutely truthful excuse. After the evening service her plea was often "she had to hurry home to get the children ready for bed."

Matt Howard thought it strange of Martha not to as cheerfully accept his company as she had done previously. But being aware of her father's sickness, and feeling confident that he had no rival, he attributed it to her anxiety, and consoled himself with the hope her father would soon be better and the old conditions resumed.

Matthew Howard was just twenty, when a sad misfortune happened; his father and mother both dying within a week of one another from a disease which was epidemic at the time.

Mr. Howard was the first to succumb. His death cast a gloom over the whole community, as he was considered one of their leading citizens, ever ready to assist in any movement for the general welfare, his money and his time at the disposal of any project he considered good for the town and people of B——.

At the time of his death, Robert Hill, Sr., took it much to heart, especially so as he was unable even to attend the burial of his oldest and staunchest friend.

The day of Matthew Howard's funeral was a general holiday. All the stores were closed, the whole town turned out, many came from a distance, to pay their last respects to a man who in life had earned the respect of all who knew him.

The little church in which the funeral services were to be held could only hold a fraction of the assembled throng, the greater part of the crowd having to remain outside to await the forming of the procession which would follow the deceased to his last resting place.

The pastor preached an appropriate sermon, dwelling

at length on the many good qualities of their departed friend, and the great loss the community had sustained by his untimely taking off. He referred to the public spirit Mr. Howard had always displayed in everything that would contribute to the welfare of their town, and closed with a few feeling remarks as to the sorrowing family that was left behind, especially sad, as their mother was lying in a bed of sickness, stricken by the same fatal disease.

But it was not until the splendid voice of Martha Hill rang out clear and strong, singing "Nearer My God to Thee," that the vast audience was so impressed that people wept profusely. As her magnificent voice was heard far beyond the limits of the church, the crowds outside pressed forward so as not to miss a single note.

Mrs. Howard followed her departed husband ere another week had passed. The people of the town of B—— were shocked. The services were held in the same little church, a similar concourse of people, a sermon by the same pastor, who again spoke for the sorrowing family that had been so sorely pressed. Martha Hill sang "Lead Kindly Light." Her voice illumined the hearts of her listeners—it seemed, as if it were an angel singing.

The whole community was proud of her. After she had concluded, Rachel Howard went toward her, and wept on her shoulder. Her grief for the loss of her parents, and her gratitude to her friend found relief in copious tears, in which Martha's mingled as they embraced.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PARTING.

The funerals over, young Matt Howard, though not of age, found himself charged with the full responsibility of conducting the extensive and profitable business which his deceased father had left him, besides the care of the younger members of the family. He had been a good son and a good brother, and so faced the ordeal like a man. He would now have to assume the position of head of the family. Previous to the death of his father and mother, he never knew what care was, always gay, and, while a willing worker in the store, paying little attention to the details. He knew his father's capacity for business, so always awaited instructions.

Now that he had to assume managerial functions a change seemed to have come over him. He was more sedate and reserved as became a very busy business man.

Only to the Hills was he the same. He was always pleased to have Robert spend the evening with him in the store, and was glad when Martha would come in. She was such good company for his sisters, who looked upon her as almost one of the family. When he saw her enter, he would merely say, "Good evening, Martha," or, if very busy, nodded and smiled, while she made her way to the cashier's desk where Rachel was installed. Occasionally, Rachel might want to be relieved for a few moments. She would say, "Come in here, Martha, and mind the cash for me for a few minutes;" if Matthew noticed the transfer, he

would shout, "See you don't take any bad money while you're there, Martha." Martha would smile at his friendly banter, while, if Bob Hill was present, he would look with ardent admiration at his beautiful sister, who was the idol of his heart.

One Sunday, some weeks after Matt had assumed charge of the store, he waited for Martha at the church door. As leader of the choir she was delayed in giving instructions to some of the younger members. She and Rachel Howard came out together.

Matt placed himself in front of the two girls and said: "Martha, I am going to see you home today, I want to talk to you." His sister smiled and said: "Well, I suppose you don't want me," and took her departure.

"No, Matthew," was Martha's reply. "You will have to excuse me. I am in a great hurry. You see I am a little late and will have to hurry home to help mother with the dinner."

Before Matthew had time to persist in his desire of seeing her home, she had turned and was on her way. He felt slighted, but, gazing after her, noticed for the first time that she was not dressed as well as formerly, and when he looked at his sisters and a number of the other young ladies who had just left the church, he recognized the difference in their apparel. Not but Martha was clean and sweet and the clothes she wore were neat on her, but she was shabby, in comparison. It began to dawn upon him that the circumstances of the Hills were far from prosperous. He resolved to go over that evening and kind of size things up. He had an uneasy feeling that he could not account for, namely: that Martha Hill was not as kindly disposed toward him as she had been formerly—why, he couldn't tell, unless probably from the stress of business since he had taken

charge of the firm he had not paid as much attention to her as he had done formerly, or perhaps, as he ruminated, some other young fellow had come between them and she did not want to be seen with him for fear of causing jealousy.

That afternoon, Martha Hill began to fill a different place in his social affairs than she had ever done before. He had thought of going over to the Hills' that evening, but then Martha's duties in the church as soloist in the choir would not allow him much time, so he resolved to defer it to the following day. But before he could leave the store Monday evening, Robert Hill came in. Matt saw at a glance he had something on his mind.

"What's up?" said Matt, as Robert and he met at the far end of the store.

"I have had some trouble with Martha," was his reply.

"What!"

"Yes, she's made up her mind to go to Chicago and seek a situation."

"Ridiculous!" exclaimed Matt. "I'd just as soon think of letting Rachel go."

"Well, she seems determined. She wants to learn some business. She claims there is no opportunity here. We have all tried to dissuade her from it, but to no use; she says she is of age now and able to take care of herself, so I don't see what we can do but let her go."

"Rachel," shouted Matt, "come here." Rachel left her desk and came over to where Hill and her brother were standing.

"What do you think? Here's Bob telling me that Martha has made up her mind to go to Chicago and seek a situation. I protest against it."

Rachel was visibly affected, she felt for her brother's anxiety. Her woman's wit knew what it meant.

"We must dissuade her from it," remarked Rachel, "Matt, you get some one to take care of the cash, and I'll go right over."

When Rachel Howard returned after seeing Martha, her eyes were red from crying.

"What does she say?" was Matt's eager question.

"Well, she's determined to go. I coaxed her and pressed her all I could, but to no avail. All she would promise me was that she would soon return, whether she got a place or not."

"What is her reason for going, do you think?" he inquired anxiously.

"Well, my opinion is that they have been sorely pinched. You see her father has been laid up for over a year, and what with the doctor bills and their big family it has been very hard on Mrs. Hill to make ends meet, and Martha wants to go to Chicago and get a position so that she can help them."

"Why, they must know that I am willing to help them to all they may require. I am sorry, Rachel, you didn't tell me this before."

"I told them, Matt, but you see the Hills have a sense of pride and don't want to be under obligations to any one, and as they have an account here already somewhat overdue—"

"You surely have not been dunning them," said Matthew hastily.

"No, Matt. Of course I sent the monthly bills out as usual, but Martha came and mentioned to me it was not convenient for her mother to pay at the time. I told her to tell her mother not to mind it; that there was no hurry and that they could have all they wanted. What could I do more?"

"Well, you should have told me," replied Matthew petulantly. "But surely Martha knows I wouldn't see them want for anything."

"She's the most particular of all. She would rather ask a stranger than she would you; she's so sensitive."

"When does she talk about going?"

"By the 10:20 tomorrow. She says she is anxious to get away. Her poor father's heart is broken, but, not to discourage her, he says maybe it's for the best, that Martha is a good girl and that there is no danger of her going astray nor forgetting her home or parents."

Matthew Howard spent the most miserable night of his life. He could not sleep for thinking what he should do. His first impression was to openly disclose his love, and prevent her going, even if he had to use force.

When the time came for the parting at Hills', Martha's mother was inconsolable and cried bitterly. Martha tried to comfort her.

"Why, mother, what are you crying for? I am only going a short distance; I can go today and be back tomorrow. When I get a place, as I am sure I will, I can write you every week, yes, every day if need be."

"But what if you should be sick?" said her mother between her sobs.

"No danger," replied the girl confidently, "and if I was," looking in the direction of her brother, "Bob could get to Chicago in a couple of hours and bring me home."

Bob took no notice of Martha's suggestion. He was in a sulk, having already strenuously objected to her going. He stood with her bundle in his arms, waiting to see her to the train.

Martha Hill assumed a much more cheerful aspect than she felt, kissed her father and mother at their front door,

all the young members of the family going to see "Sis" off. As she turned to go, her youngest brother and sister each took one of her hands, the others following as closely as they could, with Bob bringing up the rear with her bundle under his arm.

As she went down the road leading to the depot, the neighbors came to their doors, and, waving their hands, shouted "Good bye, Martha!" or "Good luck, Martha!" or "Good luck, Martha, a safe journey; wish you soon back." She waved her hand and smiled at them in turn. To those within easy reach of her voice, she said, "Thank you, Mrs. —," or "Thank you, Mr. —," as the case might be. A number of boys and girls who saw the little procession ran toward her and shouted:

"Hello, Martha, going to leave us?"

"Yes, for a little while," or some other appropriate reply to their remarks.

Ere she had reached the depot, quite a number got in line. At the depot many of her girl friends were there in advance to see her off. When she arrived they gathered around her, and stood chatting with her, while awaiting the arrival of the train.

A few minutes before train time, Matthew Howard came running along, followed by his sister Rachel. His eagerness to see Bob Hill's sister before she could get away was illustrated by the way he was walking ahead of Rachel, who came some yards behind him, unable to keep the pace. Reaching the group that surrounded Martha, she smiled at him as he said:

"Well, Martha, you're going to leave us, I see?"

"Yes, for a time anyway."

"I am awfully sorry you're going."

"Oh, never mind," chimed in one about Martha's age,

"we'll see you're not lonesome till she returns. Won't we girls?"

"No, we'll try to cheer him up while she's away," said another. Martha blushed and frowned at her. Other girls tittered.

Matthew looked sheepish under the banter.

"Bob, I want to talk to you," at the same time beckoning to Martha; the three walked down the platform together. The others, seeing they wanted to be alone, stood back.

As soon as they got out of hearing, Matthew said:

"Bob. I don't like this idea of Martha going away."

"Neither do I, but she's determined to go."

"Why, you would think I was going to the other end of the world to hear you talk, instead of only two or three hours' journey. I have told you if I don't like it I will come straight back," somewhat petulantly.

The two men were silent.

"You know, Robert," continuing, "it is time I tried to help father and mother, and there is nothing doing around here."

The time for the arrival of the train past, both men saw there was little use of discussing the thing further. "Well, Martha," said Matt, as they turned to join the group of friends who were waiting. "If you should run short don't fail to notify me, that's all I'll ask of you for the present, though I am sorry you are going."

"I think, Matt, we're already too much in your debt."

"You are not in my debt at all," replied Howard, promptly.

"Oh yes, we are, Matt, but we'll pay you."

"No, you're not. Any differences between us Bob and I can settle our two selves. You've nothing to do with it,

and Bob knows, or ought to know, that anything your people want I will be only too glad to furnish."

The girl could not but smile at his eager manner. He wished to show his friendship for her people. Having reached the waiting friends, the conversation ceased.

The train hove in sight. Martha's girl friends gathered around and began to kiss her. Martha in turn kissed her little brothers and sisters and at last it came to Bob's turn. He placed his arm affectionately around his sister's neck and kissed her.

Matt stood a few paces back, looking very sheepish. Martha extended her hand to him, he grasped it, held it a moment and let it go.

"Why don't you kiss her, Matt?" said one of the girls with a twinkle in her eye.

Martha placed her foot upon the step of the train, looking at Matt as if her last glance was for him.

"Why didn't you kiss her?" said another of the girls, as if reproaching him. If she had only kissed him he would have been the happiest man in life, and would have begged her not to go away and leave him. As it was, he wondered why he didn't detain her until the train went by. He returned to his place of business with a sad heart. He never knew how much he cared for her until she had gone.

CHAPTER V.

THE FATAL MEETING.

As Martha Hill looked out of the window of the train that was bearing her away from home and friends, she tried to look cheerful. She waved her handkerchief to those who still stood on the platform in return to their good-bye. She noticed her brother turn away and place his handkerchief to his eyes. The girls kept waving theirs until the train shot around a turn in the road and was lost to view. The last person Martha noticed in the group was Matthew Howard. She saw his troubled look. It made her sad. She sat back in her seat and began to cry. Her heart had failed her in spite of her determination to be brave.

After a time she became more composed. "It is not for long," she thought to herself. "After I get a situation in a few weeks I will visit them, or maybe some of them may come to see me." Matthew Howard was in her mind; much as she tried to dispel him, he loomed up before her, above all the rest. "In the meantime I can write to them, and they to me; how pleasant it will be when I get my first month's pay to send it home—every cent of it I can spare. And then when I am in a position to pay them a visit to show them how well I have succeeded."

And so she dreamed the entire journey.

It was about 1 P. M. on a fine afternoon when she arrived in the great metropolis of the West. As she left the depot she was bewildered at seeing the busy throng. She felt lonesome among the crowd.

For the first time in her life she was among strangers in a strange city—none to advise her. She walked till she came to the cross section of two streets.

She gazed at the girls as they went by; she noticed their neat appearance, their style, and observed that their skirts were somewhat longer than hers, which reached only to the tops of her neatly laced gaiters.

For a few moments she was in doubt as to which way to turn. She was looking in different directions, holding her bundle under her arm, when a well dressed young fellow came along. His attire was faultless, in the front of his shirt shone a diamond, he had a solitaire ring on his finger, his cuffs and collars were spotless, he wore a fedora hat and had patent leather shoes. As he drew near he gazed at the girl, she turned her eyes away so as to avert his stare; on reaching her, he stood in a very gentlemanly manner and said:

“You’re looking for a number, Miss?”

She stared at him for a moment before replying.

“I supposed you were looking for a number,” he reiterated, “and as I am very well acquainted around here I thought probably I might direct you.”

“No, thank you sir, I was just thinking which way I would go.”

“O, indeed!” smiling. “Well, Miss, that’s north, that’s south and that direction,” pointing, “is west, and over there,” turning around and pointing, “to the east is Lake Michigan.”

She smiled at seeing him so specific as to the points of the compass, as she said:

“Well, you see, sir, I am a stranger here and don’t know which way I should turn, having just got off the train.”



THE CADET AT WORK

"Oh, well," he said, laughing, "of course I can't direct you; if I could," lifting his hat, "I would only be too happy."

She looked at the nicely dressed young gentleman who professed such willingness to direct her, and then said: "What I want to find is some place where I can stay. I have never been away from home before and am somewhat awkward."

"Oh, I see. If that is all you want there are a number of hotels within a block or two from here, in any of which you can be accommodated. Probably you don't want to select a too highly priced establishment?"

"No, sir! My means are only limited. What I want is some place to stay for tonight, and tomorrow I will have time, probably, to get board with some respectable family."

"Well, Miss, if you would not think it presumptuous on my part, I would point out to you one or two places that might suit your circumstances. It's only what I would expect a gentleman to do for my sister if she found herself in a strange city."

She hesitated before accepting his proffered aid.

"I'll point them out to you, and you can make the best arrangement you can. You see, Miss, this is a very big city," smiling, "and you must take care you don't get lost."

She again looked at him without replying. There was nothing to alarm her in his make-up, he had the appearance of a gentleman, even his address was faultless, his reference even to his sisters indicated a friendly feeling. Ultimately consenting to his proffered assistance, she said:

"I will be very much obliged to you if you will."

He led her toward Clark street.

"I suppose the town you came from is not quite as large as this?" smiling.

"Oh no, sir, the place I come from is quite small; in fact, it seems to me there are more people on the street here than there are in my town altogether," laughing.

"Is that so? Then it must be a very small place."

"Yes, you see B—— is situated in a farming district."

"Oh, that is in Michigan, I believe? I was often in Michigan, but was never there. I suppose you're only on a visit?"

"No. I came to get work."

"Oh, I see! Well there's plenty of work of all kinds for young women here. I suppose it's something of a clerical position or saleslady you'd want to be?"

"I am not particular, probably I may get a situation with some family. I have some experience with housework, as we have quite a family at home."

"Well, some places are pretty hard, especially where they have much washing. At my house we have two girls, but we send all the washing out, then it comes easier."

"Then you're a married man?" looking at him.

"Oh bless you, no! I mean the old people's home."

"I see you have brothers and sisters, I believe?"

"No brothers, only sisters; four of them, and you know girls require a deal of laundrying after," smiling at her. She smiled her approval in turn.

"You go in and try this place," he said, stopping in front of a cheap looking hotel on Clark street. "You'll only be staying for a night or two, anyway."

Martha looked at the place. It seemed very imposing to her.

"How much do you think they would charge me there?"

"Well, it's on the European plan. You just sleep there and eat where you like. I should say about a dollar a night."

She thought for a moment as if in doubt.

"Go in and ask them," he said to her, "I'll stay here until you come out. If it doesn't suit you, I'll show you another place or two."

The girl went in and in a short time returned without her bundle.

"I see you have made arrangements; that's good."

"Yes sir, thank you. I am sure I am very much obliged to you for your kindness."

"Don't mention it. The man that wouldn't do that much for a lone girl in a strange city is no man at all. When do you intend to start out in search of a job?"

"I will have to begin tomorrow morning."

"Probably I could help you. If it wasn't for the two girls we have at our house I would ask our old woman to give you a place, but you see they're stickers. There is no danger of their leaving."

She smiled as she remarked, "That's very kind of you."

"Had you just got in town when I met you?"

"Yes sir."

"Probably you have not eaten for some time, then?"

"No, not since I ate my breakfast, but I am not hungry."

"Oh, that's too bad. Now there's a nice restaurant close by. I suggest that you come and take a little lunch and while you are eating I may make some suggestions as to where you may get a place."

"No, thank you, sir. I assure you I am very much obliged to you for your assistance already, but I cannot impose upon your good nature."

"Come along," he said, laughing. "If you don't eat you'll feel so weak you won't be able to work and people who employ girls in Chicago want them to be good and husky," smiling at her.

She still hesitated, but after some more pressing consented to go. After being seated at a table arranged for two, he took up the bill of fare.

"What will you take, Miss? But let me order for you. I suppose you are not in the habit of dining in restaurants."

"No, sir. This is the first time I was ever away from home."

He ordered a dainty meal. The girl ate with a relish—she enjoyed the luncheon. He kept her in conversation during the repast.

"Bye the bye, Miss," he said, smiling, "we have not been introduced yet."

She laughed. "Well, my name is Martha Hill."

"And mine," he said, by way of reply, "is Henry Washington."

"You have quite an historical name," she said, smiling. "What do you do?"

"Well, you see, my people are old settlers. The old gent has retired—he is well fixed. I'm the only boy, so have it pretty easy. I intend, however, in the near future, to take up some profession, but for the present I am a gentleman of leisure."

"You tell me you have four sisters?"

"Yes, two of them are older than I am; one of them is going to be married to a swell this fall, so we'll get rid of her. Waiter, how much do I owe you?" He hands him a check for \$1.30. Young Washington pulls out a roll of bills, giving two dollars to the waiter, who returns him his change, which he gathers from a little tray on which it has been presented, leaving the two dimes as a tip.

"Thank you, sir," said the waiter, as he took his leave.

Martha Hill begins to be impressed by the offhand, gentlemanly conduct of her new found acquaintance.

"Now, Miss Hill, if you would allow me to smoke a cigaret we'll go."

She nods and smiles, while he lights his cigaret.

"I suppose you have brothers and sisters too?" he said between the puffs.

"Yes, my brother Robert's the oldest. There are five younger than I am."

"Father and mother living?"

"Yes, but father has been troubled with rheumatism so long that Robert has to take care of the family. You see there are no places for girls in our town, so I came to Chicago to get a situation, so that I can help them. Do you think I will have any trouble to get a place?"

"None whatever. There are plenty of opportunities for girls like you here."

"I am pleased to hear you say that, as I was a little anxious."

"You needn't be. I'll probably get my old man to speak for you. Come, let us be going. Now as I have nothing to do this afternoon, I'll show you a little of the city."

"I am afraid to go too far away from the hotel, for fear I wouldn't find my way back."

"Oh, I'll bring you back. You needn't be afraid."

After strolling through the downtown district for over a couple of hours, she was impressed with the wonders she saw — the busy streets, the crowded sidewalks, the rushing street cars, the large buildings.

"Dear me, I am surprised a great many people are not run over!"

"There are lots run over, Miss. You have to keep your eyes and ears open in Chicago or you're a goner."

"It seems that way to me. Aren't those beautiful stores? I would like to get a place in one of them."

"Well, we'll go through this one. You'll see how they run it."

"Those ladies must have nice salaries," she remarked as they went through the store.

"Some of them. My old man is a friend of the proprietors here. I'll have him talk for you."

"I wish you would. I am sure I would like to get a place in a store like this."

"Well, Martha, I'll talk to him. Come now, I am getting tired. I'll take you for a car ride. You may as well make an afternoon of it."

Her hope of his aid in securing her a place led her to consent to go, but not without some misgivings as to the propriety of her accompanying a total stranger.

He took her to Lincoln Park, where he showed her the animals—none of which were more ferocious than the wolf into whose hands she fell an easy victim.

'Twas dark when they left the park. A supper in a north side restaurant, where wines and liquors were sold, followed.

"Did you ever drink any wine?"

"Yes, mother used to make some."

"Well, I will have to buy you a little glass of port to see if you can tell the difference."

After it was brought Martha Hill remarked:

"It is sweeter than what mother made."

"It is better too, I guess," smiling, and lighting a cigaret.

"Don't you think it's about time I should be going?"

"In a few moments. I want to smoke another cigaret. You'd better go to the ladies' toilet and wash your hands. You look a little mussed up after the day."

She felt glad at his timely suggestion, and the manner in which he had proposed it. While she was gone he ordered two port wines. As soon as the waiter turned his back he dropped a little powder into hers, and stirred it around with a lead pencil.

She returned radiant, having washed and smoothed her hair, the bloom of youth was on her cheek.

"Now you look better," smiling at her.

"Let us be going," she replied, paying no attention to his compliment.

"I have ordered another glass of wine for you."

"I think I should not drink it."

"Why, that's only the second. Sit down a minute." He lit another cigaret, and she sipped at the wine.

"That's not as nice as the first."

He sips at his. "A little sourer, that's all."

She drinks the fatal draught.

"Let us be going," she says with some impatience.

"Wait a moment until I finish another cigaret. No, I think I'll try a cigar. Here, waiter, bring me a cigar." The cigar is brought, he lights it.

"Hurry, let us be going."

"Wait till I have smoked my cigar. Will you have another glass of wine?"

"No, that last didn't agree with me."

"Then let us be going." They walked along North Clark street. After walking a few blocks, she said:

"I don't feel well. I am quite dizzy."

"Then I must hire a cab."

She leaned heavily on his arm, while he hailed a passing cabman. He placed her in the cab, where she fell back on the rear seat.

“Drive to Madam ——, Custom House place. You know the house?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Drive around to the rear.”

“Yes, sir.”

CHAPTER VI.

SOLD, AND PAID FOR.

Ike Rosenthal, alias Henry Washington, knocked at the door of Sadie Blomgarten's bedroom. There was no answer. He knocked again. Still no answer. The third time he knocked he waited a few moments. There being no reply, he pushed the door open and went in. Madam Blomgarten was sound asleep. He placed his hand on her shoulder and shook her. She looked up at him.

"What do you want, Ike? Why don't you let me sleep?"

"I want my money."

"Why can't you wait till I get up?"

"Oh, I don't want to stay here till you get up. Come give me the dough and let me get out of here."

"What a hurry you're in. I didn't get to bed until four o'clock. What time is it?"

"Seven. Come shake yourself and give me my money."

"How much do you want?"

"Seventy-five dollars."

"I can't afford it, you ought to be satisfied with fifty."

"No, not a cent less than seventy-five. She's cheap at that. If I had taken her to Dutch Meg's I could have got a hundred for her."

"You're a regular Shylock. Won't sixty do?"

"No! not a cent less than seventy-five. She's a catch. Just from the country."

"Wait till I get up."

"Well, get up now. I've no time to waste."

The madam sat on the side of the bed. "You're sure she's a stranger?"

"Right in off the train."

"Oh, dear, what a head I have and you come and waken me, just when I was sound asleep. You're a brute." She put her hand under the mattress at the head of her bed and pulled out a roll of bills and counted sixty-five dollars. "There!" giving it to him.

"Come on now, ten more." She demurred, but, he persisting, she gave it to him, at the same time telling him to get out. At that moment there was a piercing scream heard that rang through the building.

"That's her, I suppose," as he put the money with a roll of bills in his pocket.

"Tell Mugsy to attend to her, as you go out. I must try and get a few hours sleep," rolling into bed. Ike told Mugsy, and then went his way.

When Martha Hill awoke she had an intense pain in her head. She looked up at the ceiling. It was slanting like the roof. She gave a start, turning in the bed as if to see if she had a companion. On the other pillow there was the impression of a head as if some one had lain there. The clothes were turned up as if someone had recently left. She started again and removing the clothes from her breast, she saw she was naked. She jumped out of bed and ran to the slanting window on the roof. It was barred. She ran to try the door. It was locked. She looked around to seek her clothing. Not a stitch of her raiment was to be found. She screamed in her fright. She tried the handle of the door again, and screamed. She ran to the window. It was securely boarded. She screamed again. At this moment

a policeman was walking past the front of the house, waving his club.

"What's that one shouting at?" he said to a colored woman who was washing the marble steps.

"O, a couple of the girls have been having a scrap; one of them's full, and she's got the worst of it."

"It's a wonder they wouldn't put a wisp in her mouth," he said as he passed by, and turned into the next saloon.

The girl in the attic continued to scream. She heard footsteps climbing the stairs. She stood as did Eve before the fall, to see who was unlocking the door. A low-browed, coarse man entered. She ran to the bed, and covered herself up.

"What the hell are you shouting about?" he said, looking fiercely at her. "Do you want to waken up the whole house?"

Her teeth were chattering—she couldn't reply.

"What are you yelling at?" going toward the bed and pulling the clothes off her.

"Oh mister, why am I here?" trembling in every limb.

"We didn't bring you here," he growled. "You came yourself and brought a bloke with you."

"No! Oh no! I didn't bring anyone with me!"

"What are you giving us?" he snarled.

"Oh no, sir, I didn't bring anyone with me. I don't know how I came here."

"Well, you lie still there, and don't be making such a fuss, or I'll find a way to quiet you."

"Where are my clothes?"

He looked around as if in search of them. "That bloke you brought here with you last night must have taken them away with him."

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, as she laid her head on the pillow and wept.

"You lie still there," as he was going toward the door.

"Is there no woman in this house?" she inquired as she saw him going.

"Yes, but there's none of them up yet."

"Will you send one of them to me?" she entreated.

"There'll be none of them up for a couple of hours yet," he growled, as he went out, pulling the door after him and locking it.

She lay shivering, crying, and moaning on the bed. It was near midday when she heard the key turn in the door; a woman entered—she was large and wore a dressing gown.

"Well, what's the matter?" she said, as she entered.

"Oh, madam, are you mistress of this house?"

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

"How came I here? Tell me!"

"Well you and your husband came here last night, as I understand."

"I have no husband. It's some cruel mistake."

"Well, you passed him off as your husband, and seemed to be very friendly with him."

"You know that's not true; I wasn't friendly with anyone. I did meet a young man yesterday, but I don't know him at all. He was a stranger to me."

"Well you and him seemed to get on very well together when you came, and engaged this room."

"Don't! Don't tell me that! Where is he now?"

"He said when he was going away he would be back for you this evening. He had a large bundle with him when he left."

"Where are my clothes?"

"My man tells me he believes he took them away with him."

"Well, where is the bundle I left here yesterday?"

"You left no bundle here yesterday. When you came here at nine o'clock, you had no bundle."

"Don't be so cruel as to tell me that; no man would leave me here. Oh, madam, let me write to my parents, my brothers, and tell them what has happened. Do, for God's sake, do!"

"I can't do that till I hear from your fellow tonight; he even left without paying the room rent."

"I implore you to help me. I am a lone girl in a strange city. Do, and heaven will bless you."

"Heaven won't pay this room rent, and I can't be imposed upon."

"I appeal to you as to a mother, on my knees." Getting out of the bed and falling on her knees, she hung onto the woman's skirts.

"No use of you talking, you will have to wait until your husband, or whoever he is, comes this evening. I can't afford to have a scandal around my place, so you'll have to content yourself;" rising to go.

"Don't leave me, I implore you. Help me, and my friends will reward you."

"I'll send you up something to eat. That's all I can do for you at present, and I don't know who is going to pay me."

"Let me write to my people. They will pay you everything."

"Well, I will see, but you have no clothes."

"You can let me have some until I hear from my parents. Telegraph for me and my brother will be here tomorrow."

"Talk is cheap. How am I going to know whether you have a brother or not? I'm going to wait till I see if your fellow shows up."

She hung onto the woman's skirt. She pleaded in vain.

"Come, don't be wasting my time. I've told you what I'll do. Let go my dress. I'll send you up something to eat."

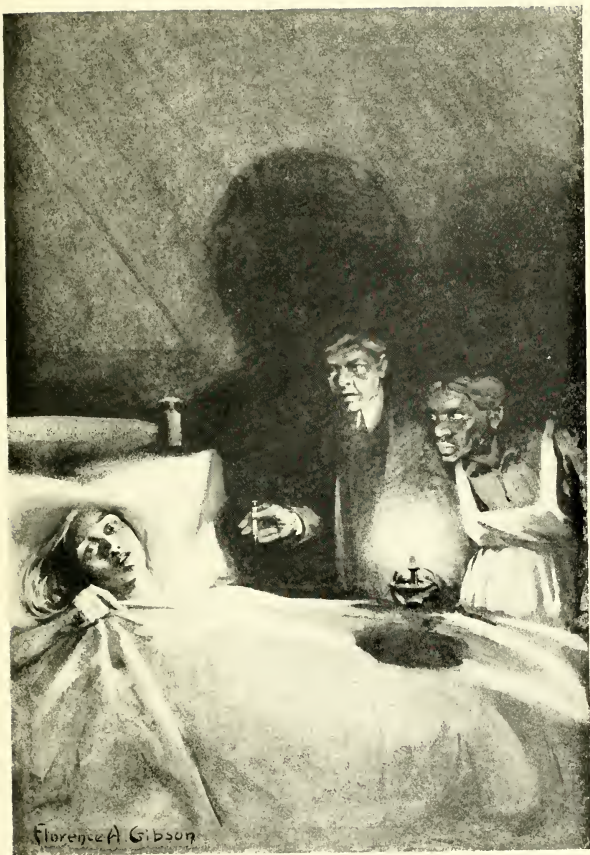
"I don't want to eat."

"Well, that's your business," as she went out, locking the door behind her.

Martha went back to the bed. She swooned, and for a time was oblivious to her surroundings.

A colored woman came in, carrying a tray on which there was a cup of tea and some bread and butter. She pulled a chair over near the bed, placing the tray on it, and left the room.

How long she lay unconscious, Martha never knew. She awoke and looked around to see if it was but a fitful dream. She realized the horrible situation. She was too weak to scream. The shades of night fell. She was alone in the dark, she could do nothing but bemoan her fate. After a time, she heard a piano playing, and sounds of laughter downstairs. She arose, and staggered to the door to listen. Her tongue cleft to the roof of her mouth. She couldn't utter a sound. She went and lay down on the bed. Again she felt as if she was about to die—she hoped that she might. At last exhausted nature came to her relief, and she slept—how long she didn't know. When she awoke, all was dark, but the sound of revelry could be heard from below. She groped for the tray. She reached the cup, she had to drink. She lay back on the bed. All hope had fled. After a while the colored woman came to remove the tray. She had a candle in her hand. She looked at the girl lying on



THE VICTIM

the bed. The girl's eyes were open; her stare was vacant. The colored woman reported to her mistress that the girl up in the attic was in bad shape.

"Well, you and Mugsy must go and give her something to soothe her. She'll be all right in the morning."

Mugsy and the negress came into the attic.

"How are you now?" inquired the ruffian.

Martha made no reply.

He beckoned to the negress who, stooping over her, pinioned her arms. The girl felt a stinging pain in her arm. She screamed.

"There now, that will do you good," he said. "Perhaps your fellow will turn up soon. Lie down." The colored woman placed the clothes over her breast and shoulders. They then left her alone.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WHITE SLAVE.

When she awoke the morning after, she gazed up at the ceiling, the same dismal surroundings confronted her. She looked at the chair by her bedside, and saw that some one had been in the room while she slept, as a jug of tea, a plate with toast, and a glass with amber-colored liquid rested on a tray on the chair. She smelled of the liquid in the glass. She hoped it might be poison, but judged it was whiskey or brandy—she could not tell which. She laid it down, and, clasping her hands together, prayed that God in his mercy might take her. She felt weak. She extended her hand, and drank some of the tea, and took a mouthful of the bread. She lay back on the bed and covered herself up. She felt cold, her teeth began to chatter. She bethought herself that the liquor might warm her—she drank some of it, and lay down to think. She couldn't think—she couldn't cry! Despair had dried the fount; her heart was chilled. She knew not what time it was. The sun's rays shone bright through the attic window, casting a ray of light on the floor. She listened. The door was being unlocked. The woman she had seen the day before entered. The girl merely looked at her.

“Well, how are you this morning? That fellow of yours never turned up after all. I'm afraid he is going to desert you.”

“All seem to have deserted me.”

“Well, you can't say I have. I sent you up some sup-

per, and your breakfast, and a drink. I see you haven't drunk it all."

"No, I don't want it. I am cold. Can't you give me some night clothes, and let me send to my father and mother?"

"You'd be in a nice position to send to your father and mother, and tell them you had picked up a fellow in Chicago and spent the night with him in a rooming house."

"I don't care. My parents would believe me."

"Rot! They wouldn't believe anything you'd say. I would have to tell them the truth."

The girl commenced to cry.

"Well, then tell the authorities," she said, amidst her tears. "Go bring a policeman. I will explain everything to him."

"I would look nice to bring a policeman in here and have a sensation. What's your name?"

"Martha Hill. My father lives at B——, Michigan. My brother lives with him. He will come, if you only send for them."

"I'll see. I must leave you now, but I will send you up some dinner, and will be back in an hour or so, and talk business to you." She left, carefully locking the door after her.

A short time after the colored woman entered, carrying a tray on which was a small teapot, some bread and butter, a plate of meat and potatoes, and a glass of spirits. When she entered the door, she locked it on the inside, placing the key in her pocket. The girl on the bed watched her every movement. She removed the tray that she had brought up in the morning, and substituted the one she brought with her.

"Get up, I want to make this bed," she said, placing another chair for the girl to sit on. The girl arose.

"Throw this over your shoulders," tossing the counterpane to her. She proceeded to make the bed, while the famished girl began to eat. The bed made, the colored woman took the tray she had brought with her in the morning, the jug and the plate, the brandy that still remained in the glass she poured into the one she had just left, and retired without exchanging another word.

It was considerable time after, when the mistress of the house entered her room. She saw that the girl had eaten, and drunk some of the tea.

"You didn't take your drink, I see."

"No, I don't want it."

"Well, it would do you good, and would put life into you."

The girl made no reply.

"Now, you talk about wanting some night clothes?"

"Yes. Can you lend me some?"

"Why, girl, my things wouldn't fit you."

"Well, there are some girls in the house. Your daughters, perhaps. Couldn't you ask one of them to lend me some?"

"I have no daughters. They are only boarders, and I could not ask them. But, I tell you what I will do: I'll buy you some while I'm out, and you can pay me back when you get some money."

"How am I to get money to pay you back, until I can get out to earn some, or I hear from my people?"

"Well, never mind. While I am out, I will buy you a few things, and I will tell you how to get the money. I won't be gone over a couple of hours."

"What kind of a house is this?" inquired the girl, raising herself in the bed.

"You'll soon find out," said the woman, as she prepared to leave.

It was near dusk, when the colored woman entered, carrying a paper box under her arm, and a slop basin in her hand. She laid the box down, and, removing the slops, said:

"I am going to bring you up some water to wash you."

The girl could do nothing but stare at her, as she took her leave, locking the door, as usual, behind her. In a short time she returned with a jug containing warm water, wash-basin, soap, towel, comb and brush. A looking-glass already hung on the wall.

"Now get up and wash yourself. There are some clothes in the box madam has sent you."

As soon as the negress had taken her departure, the girl arose and opened the box. It contained a chemise, a pair of light blue stockings long enough to come above the knees—the tag attached was marked five dollars; a pair of red silk garters with clasps marked two dollars, and a pair of light blue slippers, a light blue like the stockings, with high red heels, marked four dollars. The girl looked at them in wonder. "What do I want with those?" she said to herself. "Surely this is a mistake." She put the stockings, slippers and garters back in the box. She washed herself, carefully combed her hair, and put on the chemise. In spite of the agony of her heart she felt some relief.

The colored woman returned shortly after she had completed her toilet, bringing a tray on which were some eatables, and a glass containing liquor.

"Those things are not for me," said the girl, pointing to the box.

"They're what the madam sent up," replied the woman, gathering up some empty dishes and placing them on a tray.

"Madam will be up in a short while, and you can talk to her about them." She took her departure. The girl stared at her until she heard the key turn in the lock.

It was long after dark when the mistress of the house entered the attic. She had a candle-stick in her hand. By the light of the candle the girl could see she was dressed in evening costume. Her raiment seemed of the costliest character. She had many rings on her fingers, a diamond brooch on her breast, and a pair of long pendant earrings in her ears, a diamond sparkling on the front of each of them. The girl looked at her in astonishment.

"Well, how are you, my dear?" she said, seating herself on the bed. "I see a marked improvement in you. That is a very nice undergarment I bought you," placing her hand on the lace that covered the girl's bust.

"Yes, but I didn't want you to buy me anything so costly, and what are those things in the box for? I am sure I don't want them."

"O yes, you do," she said, smiling. "Did you try them on?"

"No. I have no use for them."

"Come now, don't be foolish. You'll want them. Why, you'll look swell in them."

"But I don't want to look swell."

"What! Have you no pride?"

"No, you should have bought me a petticoat and a dress and a pair of shoes so that I might have gone out and sought a situation, so that I could have paid you back."

"Never mind the situation. You'll soon be able to pay me back. There is a gentleman coming to see you tonight.

He is a first-class, generous fellow. Probably he will be able to do something for you. See and treat him nicely."

"I don't want to see any gentleman! Who is he?"

"Wait till you meet him. You'll find him all right."

The girl was bewildered for an answer.

"I see you haven't taken the drink I sent. You had better take some of it. You'll want to keep up your strength. Come, take a drink," picking up the glass and placing it to the girl's mouth.

"No, don't ask me to drink that!"

"Well, you'll have to take some of it," looking sternly at the girl. "I can't have you sick on my hands."

The girl opened her mouth to take a sip. The woman forced her to take a good drink of the raw brandy, which burned her mouth, and brought on a violent fit of coughing.

"Now I'm going to leave you." As she left, the sound of piano playing vibrated throughout the room. She could hear voices and laughter below. After a time she fell asleep, and dreamed of home, the happy, virtuous home she had left. She saw her father smoking his pipe in the corner, her mother sewing, Bob, her big brother, reading a book, the younger children playing a game on the table. She was siding away the dishes that had been used at the supper table. She awoke with a smile on her countenance. She heard the key turning in her attic prison. The colored woman was ushering a man into the attic. He was a large, showily-dressed fellow, wearing a thick heavy gold chain across his breast. He had two large rings on one of the fingers of his right hand, a diamond stud in his breast. The colored woman placed the lighted candle on a chair.

"Knock when you want to go," she said as she retired, locking the door behind her.

He pulled a chair up close to the bed. "How do you do this evening, Miss?" grinning at her.

She stared at him without replying.

"You're not very sociable?" he remarked.

Her heart began to pulsate rapidly. "What do you want?" she cried, her breath coming fast.

He laughed. "You know what I want. I am going to spend the night with you. You'll find me a pretty good sort of fellow."

She was speechless; hope had fled, she was incapable of resistance. As he was ready to leave in the morning, he placed a ten-dollar bill on the pillow beside her, and, taking her head in his hands, placed his foul mouth to hers, and kissed her. She turned, and, observing the ten-dollar bill on the pillow beside her, brushed it off as if it was some loathsome insect. It fell to the floor.

CHAPTER VIII.

INITIATED.

The following day, the negress brought her breakfast, leaving it on the chair beside her. There was a glass containing spirits.

“I am going to bring you up some water, to wash yourself.”

The girl was silent. She knew an appeal to the colored woman would avail her nothing. She ate some of the food, and took a drink of the spirits; her exhausted condition prompted her.

In a short time, the colored woman returned with water and towels. After removing the slops, and cleaning out the handbasin which had been used by the man, she said, “Get up now, and wash yourself.” The girl showed an inclination to lie.

“Come, get up!” the negress said, stripping the clothes from her. The girl arose and proceeded to do as told.

“Give yourself a good wash,” said the colored woman, as she left, taking the tray and tin slop pail with her, carefully locking the door as she left.

The sun was high in the heavens when the mistress of the house entered the prison chamber. “How are you now, my dear? Your gentleman friend who visited you last night spoke well of you. He said you were a very nice girl, and he is coming to see you again.” She noticed the ten-dollar bill lying on the floor where the girl had pushed it. Pick-

ing it up, she said, "Well, this is pretty good. I told you he was a generous fellow."

The girl had no reply to make to her comments.

"How long are you going to keep me here?" she inquired.

"That depends upon yourself. You see I have laid out a considerable amount on you already, and I must get it back. I will put five dollars of this to your credit."

"I don't want those things in the box."

"Well they won't take them back, so you will have to pay for them."

"You have me a prisoner here. Why do you detain me?"

"You wouldn't expect me to let you go owing me money? You must think I'm easy."

The girl started to weep.

"I must go," said the woman. "It is now luncheon time and the boarders will be waiting. I will send you up some dinner." She retired without another word.

Martha Hill lay in the attic for nearly a week. She had many visitors—flashily dressed red-faced animals, saloon-keepers, bartenders, and gamblers—the class that Madam Blomgarten could rely upon to break in her tyros. They were safe men, thoroughly reliable and in harmony with her methods and calling.

Broken in spirit, her strength failing, Martha made a pitiful appeal to the woman to take her out of the place where she lay.

"How are you going to do without clothes?"

"You must get me some. I'll die if you keep me here."

"Now, you shouldn't expect me to do too much for you. I don't feel like trusting you."

"You may trust me. If you let me go, I won't betray you."

"Well, you must stay for a time anyway. I think you are doing very nicely, and will soon have lots of friends."

"I don't want such friends."

"O come now, girls like you who pick up fellows on the street, and get gay with them, all say the same."

"I have told you I did not pick anyone up on the street."

"Well, then, he picked you up, and you came willingly with him. That's the same thing."

To this argument she had no reply.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," she said. "I will furnish you clothes and you can come down and stay with the boarders, if you will promise not to leave until you pay me what you owe."

There was no other alternative, the girl bowed her acquiescence, prompted by a prospect to escape.

That same afternoon the keeper of the house entered the room with some clothing on her arm. There was a clean chemise with elaborate lace around the neck, similar to the one she was wearing, a corset, two petticoats, one white with lace round the skirt, and a silk gauze shirt as thin as spider's web, and nearly as transparent as glass. The girl looked at it—she had never seen anything like it before.

"What is that for?" she inquired, looking at the madam holding it up for her inspection.

"This is only worn on state occasions. All our boarders wear them."

"Is it an outer garment?"

"No, you innocent, it's an inner garment. One you wear next your skin. I am not going to ask you to wear it

to begin with, but you will like it after a time. You'll find it very attractive."

"This dress I have borrowed from one of the ladies here who is about your size. I have given an order to our dressmaker to come and measure you for one. Now gather up your things and I will show you your room.

The girl, only too eager to leave her prison, began to put on the clothes.

"O you needn't mind. You can dress yourself in your room."

She followed the woman down a flight of stairs. They passed Mugsy in the passage. He nodded and smiled approvingly to the girl, who was in her chemise, carrying some of her things on her arm.

The room she was shown to looked into a yard in the rear. At her first glance she noticed the bars before the windows. The room was well furnished—a brass bed, a dresser with wash stand, a clothes closet, two chairs, a rocker and a lounge.

"I hope this will suit you," said the madam approvingly. "There is a bath room on this floor. I will show it to you while I am here. Come this way." They again passed Mugsy, who seemed to be loitering in the passage without any seeming object.

"Now, give yourself a good bath," said the woman. "I know you need it, and when supper is ready I will come for you and introduce you to the young ladies in the house. I am sure you will like them. You will find you are in a first-class place. We don't allow 'pikers' around here."

The girl, only too eager, availed herself of the advantages of the bath. Mugsy was still in the passage when she came from the bath room. She dressed herself. The only stockings or slippers she had were those in the box. She

put them on and sat down to await being called for supper. A few minutes past six, the madam entered her room.

"You look charming, my dear. A little pale; let me help you." Going to a box in which there was rouge and a puff, she put a little on the girl's cheeks. "Now that's better," she remarked, looking at the girl she was preparing for a life of shame. "Now, remember, all the girls here are known under different names than their own. You are Miss Clementina Montague. That is a little more aristocratic," she said, smiling, "than plain Martha Hill." The girl listened in silence to all her mistress's instructions.

"Follow me." The madam led her down a stair which was nicely carpeted. The statue of a nude woman holding a lamp in her hand stood in a niche at the bottom. Reaching the landing she saw what she judged was the front door leading to the street. A colored man sat on a chair beside it. Down another flight of stairs they reached the dining room, where some sixteen other women were already seated, most of them *en dishabille*. "Girls," said the madam, "let me introduce you to Miss Clementina Montague." The women nodded to her. She stared vacantly at the array of harlots, some of them younger than herself.

"You'll sit next to me, Clementina," said the woman, taking her seat at the head of the table. Martha dropped into a chair beside her. Madam touched a bell. Supper was brought in. The fare was of the best, but Martha felt too sick to eat.

Supper over at the bagnio, the women and girls left to prepare their toilet—to paint and powder; the elder ones to obscure the ravages that their calling had effected in their appearance. Clementina Montague remained in the dining room to await her owner's pleasure, her toilet being already made.

"Now, my dear," said the madam, addressing her, "I hope you will be agreeable this evening. I intend to introduce you to some nice people. I don't want you to hobnob with every Tom, Dick, and Harry that comes here. (Such recommendation was unnecessary to poor Martha, who dreaded conversation with anyone.) Of course, I expect you to be sociable with all my patrons."

The tyro remained silent.

"I would ask you to take a little brandy," continued the madam, "only there will be some drink in the parlors, and, of course, you will have to accept some from the gentlemen."

The sound of a piano being played in the parlor became audible.

"Come, now, Clementina. I see it is near eight o'clock, and our guests will soon begin to arrive."

The old She Wolf arose, the lamb followed her to the den. After ascending the stairs and going along the passage leading to the front of the building, Martha Hill observed the colored man at the front door.

Madam Blomgarten, who was in advance, signalled to her protégé to remain at the parlor door, while she went and spoke to the doorkeeper. After whispering a few words to him, he scrutinized Martha Hill very carefully as if to impress her personality on his mind. He nodded to his mistress, who, retracing her steps, conducted her protégé into the parlor where about a dozen women and girls had already assembled, the former dressed in silks and satins, with an elaborate display of jewelry. Some of the younger girls wore short dresses that came just below their knees to give them a distinctively youthful appearance.

Three young swells who were talking to the girls smiled, and nodded to the madam when she entered.

The madam sat down on a seat fronting the entrance to the parlor, beckoning Martha to sit beside her. The piano kept playing. The three young men rose from their seats, three of the girls they had been talking to stood up, the piano player turned around, and, seeing the position of the six people on the floor, commenced a waltz.

A few stragglers came in between the hour of nine and ten. Most of them singled out the woman or girl they were acquainted with and sat talking to her awhile. Some bought beer, paying a dollar a bottle for it.

The madam condescended to take a drink with some of her patrons.

Martha Hill sat wearied at the unwholesome sight. 'Twas repulsive to her. She saw those of whom she was becoming an associate retire with their partners, and in a brief time return, the man going his way, her fellow boarder returning to the parlor to await another visitor who desired to revel in her charms.

After eleven P. M. visitors became more numerous. Madam Blomgarten left her seat to talk to some of them, who seemed not desirous of entering the parlor. When such arrived she beckoned to or called the attention of some of her staff that they were wanted. The woman or girl tripped away to see who required her.

Some there came who, judging by the way they surveyed the surroundings, were strangers. The madam discerned them at a glance. Her experienced eye told her they were new to her establishment. To these she was most attentive, going to meet them at the parlor door. If they showed any hesitancy to enter, she chatted and smiled with them for a few moments, and then invited them in.

If they were of substantial appearance she sat beside

them, and, beckoning to a corresponding number of her unemployed to come over, she introduced the girls to them.

The names of visitors not being mentioned, if any of the gentlemen introduced themselves or companions by name, the madam paid little attention to their cognomens, as she judged they were fictitious. After staying until the drink was ordered and brought, she would take a sip, and, after hoping they would enjoy themselves, take her leave to again join Martha Hill, who was wearied of the entertainment.

It was near twelve o'clock, when the sound of carriage wheels could be heard at the door. The madam heard the door open, when a gentleman entered. He gave a glance into the parlor and walked toward the stairs.

Madam Blomgarten bounced from her seat, and followed him. He stood, she looked into his face and smiled.

"My dear Mr. Dent, how are you?" she said, extending her hand. Dent was a man past the half century. He might have been sixty. He was well groomed, and dressed as became a man of means.

"Fairly well. How are you? I see you have a crowd here tonight."

"Yes, but I have something choice for you. A lovely girl, fresh from the country. She's as innocent and as tender as a chicken. I hardly think I should introduce her to you. Some of my girls tell me you are very exacting."

He laughed heartily.

"Well, Sadie," addressing her by her first name, "they all seem very well satisfied, when I leave them."

"Yes, you old sport, they all say you're game."

"Come, let us see her. You know I don't like to be seen standing here."

"Well now you'll promise me you won't be too rough



THE INTRODUCTION

with her, and that you'll treat her liberally. I wouldn't have her dissatisfied for a good deal, and remember she's a little shy."

"Well, she won't be long so, if she stays in your establishment," he said, laughing. "Bring her along, and let me see her."

Madam Blomgarten went back to where Martha was sitting. The girl had a presentiment her coming foreboded evil.

"Now, Clementina," she whispered, "I am going to introduce you to a very dear friend of mine. He is a thorough gentleman and is immensely rich. I hope you will make a hit with him."

Martha's face crimsoned in spite of her week's experience.

"Come now, girl, be sociable. This is a favor I am granting you."

Martha could not see the favor, but arose like an automaton, and followed her owner, the woman who had bought and paid for her.

When Martha reached the passage, she looked toward the front door. The big black stood like a sentry at his post.

Reaching the gentleman, the madam smilingly introduced Miss Clementina Montague to him. He bowed to her, and in a business manner ordered the madam to send up a bottle of champagne to Miss Montague's room.

"Now treat her right," said the madam, smiling up into Dent's face, "and I hope to hear good reports of you in the morning, Clementina," looking at the girl, whose scarlet face portrayed her shame but gave bloom to her cheeks to the great satisfaction of one of Chicago's most honored citizens and influential business men.

The madam, seeing that Martha was in doubt as to what to do, said, "Come now, Clementina, show the gentleman to your room."

Martha began to ascend the stairs, followed by the man. As they reached the landing they met a figure coming toward them. She was a big blonde, with a magnificent head of hair; her only raiment was a gauze undergarment, such as the madam had shown and commended to Martha. The woman's outline was as plain to be seen as that of a marble statue in the Art Gallery.

Mr. Dent smiled as the figure stood before him and extended her hand. Martha sought refuge in her room; Mr. Dent, following her, closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER IX.

ANXIETY.

About the same time of day on the same evening described in the preceding chapter, in the town of B——, Michigan, a family group consisting of a middle-aged man and woman,—his wife,—a robust, powerful young fellow about the age of twenty-one, and three younger persons were sitting at supper. It was but a frugal meal. The fare was simple: roast beef and vegetables, coffee, bread and butter. They all ate heartily. The dining room overlooked a garden, whence the smell of sweet-scented flowers permeated the atmosphere. The bees could be heard humming, the butterflies could be observed perching on the hollyhocks or flitting in search of dainty morsels of which the well-kept garden had an abundance. The windows, carefully screened, excluded the insects. Everything in and around the place was clean and wholesome, showing the care with which Mrs. Hill kept her home. Supper was nearly over when her husband, looking at his wife, said:

“Isn’t it a wonder that we haven’t got a letter from Martha? She’s gone now over a week, and not a line.”

“Yes,” replied his wife. “I am sure she is very much to blame. She might at least have dropped a line to have let us know if she had secured a situation and where she was staying.”

“I was never in favor of letting her go,” remarked the young man. “Chicago’s a big city and sometimes we hear very peculiar stories about the goings-on there.”

"Now, Robert, you know Martha wanted to go. She was anxious to get a situation so that she might help us, since her father has been sick and you the only one working. She was determined to go, and she told us if she couldn't get a place she was going to come right back. Still she should have written."

"Perhaps," said the elder man, "she is waiting to get a place before she writes. We'll hear from her in a day or two, so there is no use in getting uneasy."

"Martha's a good girl and will not associate with bad company, and I am sure when she does get a place they will like her."

"That may be all right, mother," remarked the young man, rising from the table, "but I'd rather see her at home. It's a little lonesome without her."

"Well, have patience, boy," said the father, "it'll turn out all right."

The young man, however, was far from satisfied—not that he thought any ill would happen to his sister, but he felt a brother's love for her. She was all to him, as up to that time he had never had any special regard for any fellow's sister. His own was enough for him. He idolized her as did all the family. Robert's dissatisfaction filled his parents with gloom. In spite of their seeming faith in their daughter's ability and purity to keep her clear of the shoals that they knew arose in the way of girls with less sense and judgment than their daughter, in whom they had such implicit faith.

Two weeks had passed, and still no tidings of Martha Hill. A settled gloom had come over the Hill family, which seemed to spread to the whole town of B—. The neighbors were frequent in their inquiries, "Had they heard from Martha?"

Mr. and Mrs. Hill could not understand it. They did not know what to think. Robert Hill aggravated the case by his dismal forebodings.

"I know there is something wrong," he would say, "or Martha would have written before this." Seeing the effect his alarm had upon his father and mother, he tried not to make them more miserable than they were, but his impetuous nature could not be restrained.

As assistant engineer at the —— works he was away all day, usually taking his lunch with him. After she had been gone ten days he could not resist the temptation of running home during the noon hour to find if there were any tidings. None having come, he returned to his work with a heavy heart.

At quitting time he would not stop to gossip as in the past with his fellow employees. Many an inquiry was made.

"Well, Bob, any news from your sister yet?"

"There wasn't any at noon," he would say, and hurry home in hopes of hearing glad tidings. None having come, he threw himself into a chair. His mother's red eyes prevented him from talking about the only subject he had on his mind. The supper was eaten in silence, even the younger children were mute as they shared in the general anxiety.

Robert Hill began to eat sparingly. Before the time for supper was over he would rise from the table and go out.

She had been gone fifteen days when he went over to his chum, Matthew Howard. Howard's sisters, who had been friends of Martha from childhood, ran to meet him.

"Well, Robert, any news?"

"No," shaking his head. His heart was too full for further utterance.

Matthew Howard was visibly affected, and was just as anxious as was her brother. Martha Hill's absence left a

void in his existence. When she came to visit his sisters, he looked upon her as one of them. Now that she was absent, she seemed more. He reproached himself for letting her go. "I should have prevented her," he would say to himself. "I know I could if I had tried." Matt knew the straitened circumstances of the Hills since the father had been laid up so long, but, being a busy man and his sister Rachel being in constant communication with them, he neglected or left to his sister any assistance they might require. Rachel knew full well that anything she did for them would meet his approval.

The Hills were sensitive, however; both Robert and Martha were proud, and any reference by Rachel in the way of extended credit, or even assistance, was generally met with the rejoinder:

"We will get on all right."

It was the spirit of independence in Martha Hill which prompted her to leave her home. Matt Howard was the last man in the world she would appeal to for assistance. They had played together as children and had grown up to womanhood and manhood together.

That she liked him was a fact her heart's promptings told her, but he was in good circumstances. She was lowly, he never thought of such a distinction. She did.

One night in particular, to which we now have reference, Robert Hill and Matthew Howard sat in the latter's office, conferring as to what should be done.

"I tell you what I want you to do, Bob; lay off for a week and go to Chicago, and try and find her. She may have got injured, run over perhaps—there's no telling. When you find her bring her back with you. Never mind what position she has. Do that for all our sakes." Matt

Howard might have been more specific and said, "Do it for my sake. I am unhappy while she's away."

"It's pretty hard for me to get away, but that won't stop me. Chicago, however, is an immense city. I hardly know how to go about it. You know I was never away from home before."

"What you want to do when you get to Chicago is first to go to police headquarters, and tell them the facts in the case. The police will call up the hospitals for you. You needn't be shy for money, Bob, you know that."

"I am awfully thankful to you, Matt, and if we don't hear from her by Monday I'll go."

No information having come by the time prescribed, Robert Hill left at the same hour as had Martha three weeks before and—strange coincidence—stood on the same corner as had his sister in this Modern Gomorrah, three weeks previous just as she had done, looking which way he would turn. A person coming along, he inquired the way to the police department. On being informed, he went and found it.

In consultation with the officer in command he told his story.

"So your sister was never away from home before?"

"No, sir."

"Had she any acquaintances in this city you know of?"

"No, sir. She was a total stranger."

"Had she any sweetheart in B—— or any other place you know of?"

"No, sir. I never knew her to keep company with anyone."

"Haven't missed any man from your town?"

"No, sir. You see ours is a small place and she was known to everybody. All our neighbors are anxious about her."

"Well, I'll take your description of her, and the way she was dressed, and the kind of baggage she had, if any. Had she a trunk with her?"

"No, sir. She had a few things like underwear, and probably an extra dress or shirt-waist in a brown parcel. She did not bring much with her, as she expected to communicate with us in a few days and notify us of what other clothing she would want."

The officer took down the description of Martha, the clothing she wore, and the articles in the bundle as accurately as Robert Hill could give it to him, and then said, "Well, we'll see what we can do for you. Probably she's careless in writing, forgetful, like many other girls, of the anxiety she's causing her relatives."

"A friend in our town suggested that she might have happened with an accident, and be laid up somewhere."

"Perhaps so. I'll have inquiries made at the hospitals. Call in tomorrow at this time and I'll let you know what we've found out."

Robert Hill spent the balance of the day late into the night looking into the faces of the girls in the downtown district, and going through the department stores in hopes of finding her, but in vain. His inquiry at the police station the next morning was fruitless. Inquiries had been made at all hospitals, but no person answering either to the name or description had been brought in, for two weeks. He had gone from place to place, calling at police headquarters every day with the same result. He had written home, giving the address at which he was staying. He had also written to Matt Howard for him to telegraph if they had any news.

Howard wrote him at the end of the week, telling him

they had no news and inclosing twenty dollars with instructions for him to remain in Chicago for another week.

On the Monday following his arrival, he went to the police department as he had done every day. The chief, on seeing him, said, "Well, young man, we have found out something about your sister, but we have not found her. Bring in that bundle you have," he said to a subordinate.

The bundle was brought in. It had been opened. Robert Hill recognized it at a glance.

"Those are my sister's things."

"I guess so," replied the officer. "We found those at a hotel on Clark St. where a girl answering the description of your sister secured a room for the night, paid for it, and left immediately after and never returned. My man asked if she was alone, and the clerk in the hotel said she was."

Robert Hill grew ghastly pale on hearing this news.

The mystery had deepened.

"I have my men inquiring at the resorts now to see if they can locate her."

"What do you mean?" inquired Robert eagerly.

"Why, the sporting houses, the brothels."

"My sister would never enter a place of that kind," said Hill, emphatically.

"I hope not," replied the officer. "But, young man, you have a good deal to learn about women and the ways of a big city like Chicago. How long are you going to stay here?"

"I would like to stay until I find her."

The police did make inquiry at some of the resorts.

They were careful, however, not to pry too closely into the business affairs of people who, they knew, had the protection of men high in official positions. One called at Madam Blomgarten's. He was extremely civil, and well

known to the madam, who saluted him sociably by extending her hand and saying:

"Well, Mike, what's up now?"

"I am looking for a girl that's missing."

"What kind of a girl is she?"

"She's between eighteen and nineteen, had dark brown hair, blue eyes, about five feet four inches in height and slim built. Her name is Martha Hill, and recently arrived from Michigan."

"Never heard of her. The only woman that has come here within the past two months is one from St. Louis. She has dark hair, but is tall and stout. She tells me she ran away from her husband because he treated her badly."

"Oh, that's not her," replied the copper, who owed his position to the bosses in the district and was fully aware of the penalty over-officiousness would cost him. As he was about to go the madam slipped him a two-dollar bill with the recommendation:

"Buy yourself a drink."

"Thank, you, ma'am."

Previous to Robert Hill leaving Chicago he paid a final visit to the police department, where he was informed that, after a most diligent search, no trace of his sister could be found.

"Perhaps she didn't stay in Chicago," said the officer on duty. "She may have got a situation that has taken her out of the city, and which has caused a delay in her communicating with you."

"I don't know what has become of her. I am afraid she is lost to us forever. If my sister was living she would have never left her parents in such suspense."

"Well, my man, we have done all we could for you."

Hill shook hands with the police officers and determined to return to B——. He had a heavy heart. His sister had disappeared as if the ground had opened and swallowed her.

CHAPTER X.

LOST BEYOND A DOUBT.

On arriving at his home town, Robert Hill had to confront the worst experience of his life: how could he tell his parents the futility and hopelessness of his search for their daughter, his sister? He hesitated for some time as to what was best to do. As good fortune would have it, there were none at the depot, only the porter, whom he passed hastily. Not being in the mood to speak to outsiders, no matter if they were friendly with him, as were all the people in his town, all of whom knew of the anxiety of him and the family and shared in their grief, as it was common talk, "We wonder what has become of Martha," he took a walk up a secluded road where he was not likely to meet anyone, that he might collect his thoughts as to how best to break the sad news to the anxious ones at home. He ultimately resolved to first consult his friend Howard and seek his advice,—Matt knowing in advance that, up to a few days before, his mission had been a failure.

On reaching Howard's store, Rachel, who saw him entering, left the cashier's desk in haste and ran forward to meet him.

"Well, Robert, did you find her?" There was a tremor in her voice, as she saw the downcast expression on Hill's face, who only shook his head. His heart was too full of grief to answer her inquiry in words.

Rachel's tender heart prompting tears, her sobs aroused

Matt, who, attending to customers at the far end of the store, came running forward, pale with apprehension.

"Well, Bob, I see you've returned. What news?"

"None!" replied Hill, his voice being choked against further utterance.

The three stood silent, while all the customers in the busy store came forward to hear the news in which they were all deeply interested. They all, however, surmised the worst by the faces of Hill, Howard and his sister. They asked no questions, but left the sorrowing trio alone.

"I would like to talk to you privately," said Hill to Matthew.

"Then come up to my room."

Rachel went back to her desk, wiping her eyes as the tears coursed down her cheeks.

On reaching the room, Howard was the first to speak.

"You failed in finding her, Bob?"

"Yes, not a trace of her, even after we found her parcel and the hotel in which she secured a room on the day of her arrival, as I advised you in my letter."

"Had the police no theory? What did they suggest on your final visit?"

They suggested that she may have secured a place that took her temporarily out of the city, and that she was careless in writing, or maybe her letter advising her people had miscarried. The other suggestion, preposterous to consider, was that she had become an inmate of a sporting house, as he called them."

"What is that?" inquired Howard.

"Why, a brothel, a house of ill-fame."

"Bah!" shouted Matt. "The very suggestion was an insult and I would have told him so if I had been with you."

"Well, the policemen treated me very considerately.

The chief gave instructions to make inquiry at the hospitals and even search the records at the coroner's office and of his own volition had his police investigate the sporting houses, as he called them, but could not find any trace of her after she had left the hotel on the day of her arrival. That they made a careful search, we may be assured, as they found her bundle with her clothes in it."

"I don't know what to think," ventured Matt, "except that she got a place right away, which took her away from Chicago for a time, and she thoughtlessly neglected informing us. Possibly when she arrived that afternoon she immediately went out to seek a position and obtained one which, if she had to leave the city immediately, allowed her little time to write. She's to blame, anyhow, and when I see her I'll tell her so."

"But what am I to say to mother and father? They are already in a state of the greatest anxiety over her and I am sure when I tell them I couldn't find her it will break their hearts."

"I'll go over with you," said Matt, "and we'll cheer them up the best we can, the going out of Chicago for a time is the most feasible and we'll impress them with it and wait for events."

On arriving at the Hill homestead, as soon as the anxious mother saw them enter, she looked beyond them in hopes of seeing a third party, but seeing no one she fell back in her chair. The father looked up at the two men to await information, while the younger members grouped around their brother, looking into his face for tidings of their sister.

Howard was the first to speak. "I don't want you people to be too despondent. Robert tells me that the Chicago police have a very reasonable theory for her absence,

and that is, that on her arrival in Chicago early in the afternoon of the day she left, she had ample time to go in search of a place, and more than probably was offered one that took her temporarily out of the city. I have been carefully watching the advertisements in the Chicago papers ever since she left, and, in reading the columns where female help is required, I have frequently come across some 'ad' inquiring for young women to act as ladies' maids, others where nurses are wanted, and quite a number offering positions as companions to well-to-do women, and frequently one explaining that the people advertising are about to leave the city, so the person applying must be prepared to travel. If, then, Martha had such an offer, probably she would accept it, and in her desire to secure it might thoughtlessly have neglected writing to us, hoping to give us a surprise, when she would let us know of her good fortune."

"But she should have informed us," said her mother. "She must know how anxious we would be about her, and I don't care what excuses you make for her, Matt, she is very much to blame."

"Well, mother, said Bob, relieved somewhat by Howard's explanation, "let us not blame her too much till we hear from her. The policemen suggested she may have written, but her letter miscarried. You know Martha never had much correspondence and she, herself, may have misdirected her letter."

Just at this time a number of neighbors, who had heard of Bob's return, gathered in to hear the news. Howard told them of the probability of Martha getting a position that took her out of the city, perhaps out of the country for a time, so there was nothing left for us all but to wait, adding, as a consolation to the old people, that he felt confident she would turn up in good time all right. His expressed

confidence was far from what he felt, and belied his looks.

Another week had passed, and no tidings from Martha. 'Twas useless to search for her, if the Chicago police could not find her. What to do they were at a loss to know. Then anxiety gave way to despondency, which settled on the Hill homestead, ere another week had passed.

Matt Howard got into communication with the chief of police, who replied promptly that they had no tidings whatsoever of the girl, but the entire force had her description among many others who seem, as it were, to have been swallowed up soon after entering the city. "She, however, I am informed, was a most exemplary girl, and as such was not likely to go astray, as many of the flighty things who are dazzled by the lights in a large city and are but a short time here, before they get their wings singed. As to your proposition to meet any expense that may be incurred in the search for her, that is entirely unnecessary, as I have notified the department under my jurisdiction to keep a good lookout for any girl of the name or answering her description. And if they should find anyone under any circumstances they may have grounds in believing she is the party wanted, to bring her into headquarters. I still reiterate my first impression after we had made the first search for her and failed in finding her, that she had left the city shortly after her arrival. As to your query, why should she leave Chicago and not take her bundle with her, I would say the articles she left behind were of no great value, and probably if she had received an urgent demand for her services which would require an absence of temporary character from the city, she might feel that her clothing was in a safe depository until her return; or another proposition being, as you describe her, a very prepossessing girl, and getting a situation as either ladies' maid or companion, she

might deem the clothing left behind unsuitable, and a generous employer would readily make up the deficiency. We, however, cannot find what is not here, but like her friends in B——, will have to wait and hope for the best.”

Weeks went by, and no tidings of the girl. Robert, her brother, made occasional trips to Chicago, on one occasion accompanied by Matt Howard, but, after the most diligent search and inquiry, returned more hopelessly disheartened than ever, until a settled conclusion was reached by both friends and neighbors, that Martha Hill was not in the land of the living. Why or how she had met her fate, none could surmise, but that she had lost her life and was lying either at the bottom of Lake Michigan, the river, or in some unknown grave, was the final conclusion. Only her parents prayed for her, and still clung to hope.

CHAPTER XI.

RESIGNED.

Martha Hill had been but two months under the control of Sadie Blomgarten, when that lady informed her she was in debt to the extent of one hundred and seventy-five dollars—after all allowances had been made for the money debited to her credit. As an asset against this she had an amount of clothing and a quantity of cheap showy jewelry, all of which the madam had purchased for her at the stores prescribed by the bosses who guaranteed protection to her in her nefarious business.

The dresses and underwear had to be purchased at a certain store, the shoes and slippers at another, the millinery at another, the jewelry at another. Free trade was not permitted, the prices the inmates of such houses have to pay is out of all proportion to their value, but those who are slaves must obey. Even the madam who owns and controls the establishment under a permit (not from the man higher up, but **the man highest up**) has to pay an enormous rental to one of Chicago's influential—yea! perhaps most respected of citizens in our shoddy, commercial society.

Martha Hill raised no objection when informed of her indebtedness. If the dame had told her it was five hundred it would have been the same. The girl was degraded—subdued, she never ceased thinking of home and of the dear ones she had left behind. But how could she ever meet them again? She banished the thought. She was an unwilling victim to conditions fostered by many, condoned by others,

understood by few. She had little desire to go out now. If she had, where would she go, to whom could she tell her story? Who would believe her?

Madam Blomgarten would testify that she came to her establishment of her own free will, and would be corroborated in her testimony by the colored man at the door, who saw her brought in by the negress who attended her, and by Mugsy. The preponderance of evidence would be against her, besides she had learned from some of the other inmates that Sadie Blomgarten was thought much of in influential, political, and even judicial circles, which she believed was probably true, or else why would she be allowed to run such an institution which had for its purpose the barter of the bodies and souls of the daughters of men?

So Martha Hill, as thousands before her, submitted to her fate. She was dead to the old world in which she had lived, and, in spite of an aching heart, had to conform to the new.

She was popular in the resort, she never pushed herself on anyone of the many visitors as did the veterans who, devoid of shame, ogled every man who came into the place in their desire for patronage.

For this reason none were jealous of her.

Sadie Blomgarten took pains to introduce her to her wealthy patrons as a girl just from the country.

"Such a nice girl and a charming entertainer. I know you would like to make her acquaintance." So poor Martha would be introduced to the aristocratic rouses that frequented Sadie Blomgarten's brothel.

One evening while at supper the madam made an announcement that a number of the girls would have to attend the First Ward Democratic Ball, and she would expect those she would select to go to put on some style so as to keep up

the **respectability** of the establishment. Many of the girls looked significantly at one another, they knew what it meant: more clothes; more debt.

"I have been compelled to buy a hundred and sixty dollars worth of tickets. That is ten dollars apiece for each of you girls and to rent a box. So you'll all have to do your best to help me get it back. You know, girls, if I do well, you do well."

It was the old gag between the employer and the employee; the mutual interests between capital and labor. Probably the madam had read something about the common interests in the Chicago press.

The annual round-up of everything that was vile had to be a masquerade. The madam set about making suggestions as to suitable costumes. The younger members had to dress as pages and school girls, the latter having short skirts and slates on which they might put down the names and addresses of gentlemen whose acquaintance they made, and the dates if they were successful in making any.

Three of the larger women, she decided, should wear dominoes with a four-cornered hat, such as students wear at college. Their dominoes were to be black with large figures in white on their backs, showing the number of the house in which they lived, each should carry a lengthy stave with gilt knobs, the center one of gold to be carried by the big blonde, the knobs on the staves of the other two should be of silver,—the madam thought that would be very impressive.

The box that she had engaged would only hold six, that would be herself and colored maid, Clementina Montagne, Seraphina Trudell, Lomenia La Blanche and Marguerita Volterchamp. Those girls had to have furs as well as some extra finery suitable for so auspicious an occasion. So

their score was increased, the latter three, being long in the service and knowing the wiles and methods of the madam, did not owe much. With Clementina Montague it was different. She knew enough, however, to know her bill would receive a considerable boost.

One afternoon, while talking over the affairs in the back parlor, giving the four who had to occupy the box with her a little instructions as to their line of conduct at the ball, and showing them the furs she had bought which she vowed were of the very best, some of her listeners looked at one another significantly. Clementina Montague paid no attention whatsoever—when the colored woman announced a visitor.

“What kind of a fellow is he?” inquired Sadie, not caring to be interrupted at the time.

“A clerical looking man with a young woman.”

“What is she like?” said the madam, getting immediately interested in finding a young woman was part of the visitors.

“O, I think they are begging,” replied the negress.

“Go find out what they are after and come and tell me. You see I’m busy.”

The colored woman returned in a short while and said: “They want to see yourself.”

“Well, tell them to come in.”

A very sanctimonious looking man entered, followed by a young woman who could not be over twenty years of age. She stood very demure looking at the madam and the four young women who each in turn looked at her.

“Well, sir, what can I do for you?”

“Good afternoon, ladies,” smiling graciously.

The women took their eyes from the girl who accompanied and inclined their heads toward him.

"What is it? Spit it out!" said the madam, showing some impatience.

"Well, you see, ma'am, we are collecting for the South African mission, and we came to see if you would contribute something toward the spreading of religious truths among the poor, benighted people who inhabit the dark continent. We are at great expense to keep the service in that remote region in a manner it should be."

A couple of his listeners began to titter.

Martha Hill looked first at him and then at the girl. Her mind revolted at the idea. Could any sanctity be secured from money obtained from such a source?

"Don't you think you could find enough to do among the niggers here," remarked Sadie, "without going to Africa?"

"Ah, we have our mission here, madam. We are not unmindful of our obligations to the poor colored people here in Chicago."

"Well, I don't think you're making much impression on them."

"I admit it's a great task, but we are untiring in our efforts."

"Indeed! Is that young woman with you a missionary?"

"Yes, we hope to send her out with the next consignment."

"How do you think a couple of those would do?" smiling and looking in the direction of Lomenia La Blanche and Seraphina Trudell, who had long held residence in the Blomgarten house of infamy. Both women smiled.

"I think," said the madam, continuing, "they could convert more negroes than either you or her."



THE AFRICAN MISSIONARIES

La Blanche, Trudell and the Volterchamp women laughed heartily at the idea. Martha Hill frowned.

"Ah, you see, madam, it requires a special training for the work we're employed in."

"Well you may depend upon those girls of mine having winning ways. I think they'd make some impression on some of the old chiefs out there."

"Probably they would, ma'am, if they had the necessary inspiration," he said, smiling.

"Do you expect to go out there, Miss?" inquired the madam, looking at the young woman.

"Yes, ma'am, I hope to get a call in the near future."

"Aren't you afraid they'll eat you?"

"The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church," replied the girl in a resigned tone.

"Well, here's a five-dollar bill for you, Miss. If you can convert a few niggers in Hooloo-Galoo-land go and do it, but never advise any of them to come to Chicago. We've enough savages here already, and, if you should change your mind about going, come and see me."

The young missionary took the five-dollar bill, and thanked the donor, while the sanctimonious looking escort she had with her turned the white of his eyes up to the ceiling as if in the act of invoking a blessing on the madam and her fair assistants, after which they took their departure amidst the hilarious laughter of three of Madam Blomgarten's protégés. Martha Hill felt a sickening sensation, to think, even in the cause of religion or charity, young women of good character should ever enter a place dedicated to sin and shame.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRST WARD DEMOCRATIC BALL.

In the vast hall, where the annual round-up of the unsavory and vicious had to take place, there assembled a crowd of pimps and prostitutes that could not be gathered together, at one time and in one place, in any other city of the habitable globe, not even in Paris, noted for its demi-monde and their revelries; or is it reasonable to suppose for a moment that Sodom and Gomorrah, in the zenith of their notoriety, could have produced an outpouring, more to the taste of his Satanic Majesty?

It is not to be understood, however, that all those assembled belonged to the underworld. Many of those present had come to gaze on the assemblage so widely advertised, not alone by those who reaped the fruits of its success, but also those who, fierce in their opposition to the putrid affair, gave interviews to the press in condemnation—that so excited the curiosity of the general public that thousands flocked to the function to see for themselves the character of the assemblage, and the manner in which it was conducted.

As a rule, those took refuge in the galleries which, like the floor, was crowded to suffocation, for here they could better obtain a view of the confidence men and courtezans, without having to rub elbows with them.

Many others, less scrupulous, remained on the floor, so as to be in closer proximity, and see at shorter range the showy, bedizened brothel keepers and their scarlet assistants.

On this special occasion, at an early hour the galleries were crowded to their full capacity, so that many had to content themselves with standing on the stairs leading thereto.

Fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, young and old, craning their necks to look down upon that group of hopeless degenerates! The thoughtful wondered what Chicago was coming to, or how a Christian community could tolerate so loathsome an exhibition. Some left early, disgusted at what they had seen, but many stayed to the end. The unwholesome spectacle will linger in the minds of those who stayed to see the close of the orgie for all time.

And this in the name of Democracy!

There were two bands in opposite sections of the gallery which at an early hour alternately played popular airs, or pieces acceptable to the dancers who, anxious to participate in the mazes of the Art terpsichorean, began to select partners and flounce around the well-polished floor.

None were allowed to enter the space set aside for dancers, except those who wore masks. This was small restraint, however, as masks were cheap. As soon as many of the women passed the portals, they lifted their masks above their foreheads, so that those who knew them, or were desirous of making their acquaintance, (formal introduction being absolutely unnecessary), could get a full view of their brazen faces. The veterans were easily recognized by the lavish amount of paint on their cheeks, eyebrows and lips; art being utilized to cover up the ravages of outraged nature.

About ten o'clock things began to get lively, many of the boxes were occupied, corks began to pop, and champagne began to flow. In the basement where beer was the order of the hour, nearly every seat was occupied. The

lower strata of harlotry received most attention here. A little later in the evening, when more hilarious, they joined the busy throng on the upper floor. Ten P. M. was considered early for the night hawks, however.

Shortly after ten, Madam Blomgarten and her four assistants arrived, the colored maid bringing up the rear. There was an immediate buzz among the crowd, as a grand dame had arrived, and two of the ushers ran forward to escort them through the crowd. Madam Blomgarten bowed right and left to many who recognized her, as behooved a royal personage who stood in high esteem among those who gazed in admiration at her and the extravagantly dressed women who followed in her wake. All four were fairly good looking. Three of them were somewhat faded, but paint and powder furnished a substitute for the bloom that still remained on the cheeks of Clementina Montague, whose demure bearing strongly contrasted with the professional smiles of her three associates. They had many acquaintances on account of their long experience in their profession, who smiled or nodded to them as they passed.

Arrived at the box reserved for them, each of the women took off her furs and handed them to the colored maid who occupied a seat in the rear.

Madam Blomgarten, addressing her subordinates, said: "Clementina, you and Miss La Blanche sit on the front seats, you and Miss Trudell," addressing Miss Volterchamp, "will occupy those seats," alluding to those immediately behind the two first named. She, like a practical business woman, was occupying a center seat behind the last named two, crowding her colored maid into a remote corner. This arrangement was for the purpose of better showing off her wares.

A crowd began to gather around the box, and stare at

Martha and her associates. Madam Blomgarten was nodding to some people she recognized.

A well-dressed man, in evening costume, stood outside the rail, in the rear of the box, waiting until the madam would turn so as to attract her attention. When she did, she tugged at Clementina's sleeve.

"Clementina," she whispered, "Mr. Dent."

Clementina bent over to speak to him. He was a steady patron of the house of Blomgarten and, though a libertine, had the manner and air of a gentleman.

"Will you have a seat?" said the madam, addressing him. "We can make room for you."

"No, thank you," he said, smiling. "I just wanted to pay my respects to Clementina, and buy her a drink." A waiter stood at attention.

"Bring a half dozen bottles."

"Yes, sir."

The waiter ran to fill the order. On his return, he drew the cork from one of the bottles, and filled five glasses. Each of the four white women took a glass, as did Mr. Dent, who reached forward his glass so that Clementina might touch hers with his. She smiled, he bowed. Dent paid the bill.

Clementina, seeing Mr. Dent's desire to speak to her, rose from her seat and came toward him, having to lean over the madam's lap, on account of the smallness of the compartment.

"Clementina, you look more beautiful than ever," he whispered to her, but plainly audible to the madam, who smiled her approval. "I will be around a little later," he whispered, as he took his departure.

"Miss Montague, I am a little jealous of you over Mr.

Dent," said the madam jokingly to her protégé. "A few friends like him and your bread will be buttered on both sides."

The other three women in the group smiled their approval. Clementina took her place in front, the waiter pulled the cork of another bottle and, laying it on the little table, stood attention. A friend of Miss La Blanche arrived, and after a brief talk which seemed to be very agreeable to Miss La Blanche, who smiled, and patted him on the cheek with her fan, he ordered three bottles, and, after taking a drink, went his way. In due time the patrons of the other two ladies came, and, after a little by-talk, which seemed to amuse them, ordered champagne, took a drink or two and went their way. In a brief time the table in the compartment occupied by the Blomgarten retinue was covered with champagne bottles, a mark of distinct popularity. The wine was so abundant that Miss La Blanche and her two experienced associates were able to treat some of their less prosperous friends who, though unable to purchase, had a vigorous desire to consume.

Clementina, not having the proper caste, persisted in inviting the colored maid to take some, which she did with alacrity.

It was now near eleven, and Madam Blomgarten was gazing somewhat anxiously toward the main entrance. At last a commotion was observed at that part of the hall. Many ran to see what it was about. It took a number of ushers to make way through the crowd, out of which there appeared three women walking abreast. They had on Duchess of Queensberry hats, the center one having two large black ostrich plumes in it. The other two had white plumes. They wore black dominoes, on the back of which in large white figures was the number of Madam Blomgar-

ten's seminary of vice. Each had a stave in her hand; the center one of the three, the big blonde, had a gold knob on the top of hers, the other two had silver ones. The women had trains to their dresses, each being carried by pages. Their entrance caused a marked sensation, it being demonstrated that Madam Blomgarten had carried off the honors of the evening. As the women paraded around the floor reserved for dancers, they were followed by a vast concourse of people crowding one another to get a view of the Grand Harlots, representing one of the leading houses of ill fame. On reaching the box occupied by the madam, they right-faced and stood at attention as if for inspection. Hundreds clapped their hands in approval. Madam Blomgarten came to the front of her box and bowed right and left to her admirers, just as a prima donna might be called to the front of the stage by an appreciative audience for an encore. Some cried "A speech! A speech!" but this was not in her line, or her modesty forbade. She beckoned to the big blonde who, on coming toward her, received instructions to parade through the whole building, where the crowd was not too dense. The madam knew the value of advertising, and this was not only unique but forcible and agreeable to the men higher up, who knew the madam could be bled more copiously on their next grand carnival.

At this hour the festival was at its zenith. The lavish consumption of wine was telling on the women, who lost all reserve and passed ribald jokes with all who came in close proximity to the boxes. Youths of tender years solicited champagne that was handed out to many a beardless boy. Old men capered on the floor with girls of tender age, but seemingly ripe experience. In the basement, where the lower strata of the underworld took refuge, there was a general debauch. The abandoned women smoked, cursed,

and used vile language to the amusement and delight of their male entertainers. Beer flowed like water. The busy waiters hurried hither and thither to the cry of "Here, waiter, bring us some beer!" It was nearly all served in bottles, as on those most profit was realized. One lady, well in her cups, insisted in dancing on one of the tables, to the great delight of numerous spectators, who clapped their hands in approval.

Upstairs the managers were discussing the advisability of commencing the grand march, and soon, with the approval of the leading functionary, a bugler in one of the bands was instructed to make the announcement by a few vigorous blasts on his instrument. The gathering seemed to understand the call, as there was a rush from all sections to the point of starting. Many of the young ladies, who occupied the boxes, began to scramble over the rail so as to get to the dancing floor. To accomplish this feat, they had to place one leg over the barrier, which, in many cases, caused a good deal of their lingerie and silk stockings to be exposed, amid hearty laughter by the onlookers, but invoking neither resentment nor embarrassment in the fair damsels, who rushed off to seek partners for the grand march. Miss La Blanche, eager to join in the procession, jumped to her feet, and had one of her legs over the dividing rail when the madam, remonstrating with her for her lack of dignity, pulled her back to that young lady's chagrin, who, spying in the crowd one of her early managers when she was an amateur in the profession, was anxious to join him.

Our ladies of special mention had indulged freely in the alluring but deceptive wine. Martha Hill had taken sparingly, compared with her colleagues. She had taken enough, however, to warm her blood without benumbing her brain. She was fully alive to all that was going on,

and looked with interest upon the busy scene with its excited throng.

At length, the Grand Marshal took his position at the head of the ranks. The band blazoned forth a suitable air, and the grand march was on. Many of those wearing badges had choice positions well up in the front with members of the demi-monde on their arms. At the commencement of the parade, a circle of the hall was necessary, so that proper formation of the line could be obtained. As the advancing column approached the box in which Martha Hill sat, she suddenly jumped to her feet, and, pointing her finger at a man who was approaching, she exclaimed in an excited manner, "Who is that man?" Miss La Blanche, who was standing close behind her, said, "Him with the woman with the scarlet dress? Why, that's Ike Rosenthal." "What is he!" she exclaimed. "A pimp," replied Miss Volterchamp, with contempt. Just as this moment, Ike Rosenthal and his fair partner, to whom he had been talking, reached the Blomgarten's box. Martha Hill clutched a glass which was standing on the table, and, as Ike Rosenthal turned toward the box at the moment, threw it full into his face. There was an immediate panic. Rosenthal let out an oath, and made for the box, swearing that he'd have her life. She grabbed one of the champagne bottles and, brandishing it in her hand, attempted to strike him with it, but was restrained by Miss La Blanche, who held her arm, while a man in the procession held onto Ike Rosenthal. "You dirty cow," he exclaimed, "I'll get even with you." "Damn your rotten soul in hell!" she hissed between her teeth, as her associates in the box closed around her. A policeman rushed to the front. One who was in command ordered Madam Blomgarten to remove that woman, or else he'd lock her up. The madam, white with rage, cursed Clementina, shout-

ing, "You have disgraced us, and we were doing so well!" she exclaimed, as if she was about to cry; falling back in her seat, while Martha's associates stood between her and the crowd. One young fellow, getting through the cordon of police, yelled, "Let us pull her out!" He had no sooner made the suggestion than Mugsy, who had rushed to his mistress's box on seeing the commotion, struck him full in the face, and threateningly menaced other youngsters bent on mischief. Two or three outsiders who had entered the box from the rear, passing by the colored woman, were driven out by the police, who, now having sufficient force, formed a cordon around the box, while some of the managers of the entertainment led Ike Rosenthal away, his white shirt dress suit and badge bespattered with wine. The parade was broken up for a time, until one of the leaders of the orgie came forward and peremptorily gave instructions to the police to remove that woman. He in turn told the madam if she would not take her out, he would. Madam was in doubt for a moment as to whether she would let the policeman do it or not, but, finally coming to the conclusion that her evening was spoiled anyway, resolved to go home. Gathering up their furs, and escorted by a number of police to a carriage that was secured for them, the colored woman having to sit up with the driver, they set out for home, Madam Blomgarten berating Martha all the way for the disgrace and ruin she had brought on her. Martha, suffering from the reaction, was deaf to all her denunciations.

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CHAPTER XIII.

REBELLION.

On arriving at the brothel after the ball, Martha Hill sought the seclusion of her own room, sick at heart and weary of limb, the reaction following the excitement of seeing her betrayer for the first time since their fatal meeting arousing whatever little combativeness there was in her gentle nature. She was anxious to avoid the scathing tongue of her owner. On reaching her room she threw herself on the bed and wept bitter tears, as the memory of the loved ones she had lost forever came prominently to her mind. The name of Ike Rosenthal sank deep into her memory; she would never forget it. She lay long awake. At length nature required her to rest; she fell asleep and dreamed, as she had often done before, of brighter and happier days. It was well into noon when she awoke to the stern reality with an aching heart caused by the hopelessness of her condition, and an aching head through an over-indulgence in wine, though she had drunk sparingly in comparison with her three associates, who were more accustomed to such libations. Madam Blomgarten continued to rave about the disgrace that had been brought upon her, especially after the magnificent program she had laid out and which was running with such marked success until Clementina behaved so outrageously.

“And after all I have done for her!”

This last utterance of hers was too much for Miss

Volterchamp, who had taken freely of the wine, and told her to shut up.

"All you have done for her! You do a lot for anybody. It's us that are doing everything for you."

Madam Blomgarten looked at her in amazement. She wasn't in the habit of hearing back-talk in her slave pen. Rebellion was promptly suppressed under ordinary circumstances. She would say to her veterans, "If you grumble you go. Come, Mugsy, see that this one packs up and quick." Mugsy, as chief bouncer, beckoned them to go. They knew what he meant, and hastened to get ready. If they attempted to get another place of similar standing in society, the boycott was invoked. Madam's influence with **the men higher up**, as they are called, and the collector closed the select houses against them, so that they had to take refuge in houses of a lower and cheaper grade.

Madam Blomgarten was about to show her authority over Miss Volterchamp, when Miss La Blanche chimed in, "Yes, cut it out, we have heard enough of your philanthropy to your girls. Clem showed spunk when she threw the wine in his face. I'm sorry I didn't let her brain him with the bottle, the dirty little pimp."

"So you're defending her too!" shouted the madam. "Well, I can live without you two."

"Well, we can live without you!" yelled Miss La Blanche back to her.

"And me too; count me in," said Miss Trudell. "And if we go, we'll take Clem with us. You can't bulldose us the same as you have done her. If we go, she'll go too and you can't stop her."

The magnitude of the rebellion staggered Sadie. She was rip-roaring mad, but was lost for a suitable reply.

Just then, the big blonde arrived. She had been tramp-

ing around the floor of the dance hall with her two associates, advertising Madam Blomgarten's establishment, and had been jostled by the crowd who surged in front of her, in rear of her, and on both flanks of the trio to get a better look at them and to note the numbers on their backs. She had hardly time to get a drink, as she afterward remarked.

As she entered the back parlor she saw the commotion. "What the h——'s up!" she exclaimed.

"Why, Sadie's jumping on us on account of what Clem done to Sheeny Ike, and prating about all she has done for us girls."

"Is she!" shouted the blonde. "Don't we do anything for her? I've been tramping around all night like a hobo with a sign on his back, until I'm hardly fit to stand. I suppose she counts that nothing either."

This was too much for Madam Blomgarten, who, bouncing from her chair, shouted, "I'm going to bed!"

"Pleasant dreams to you!" yelled Miss Volterchamp after her, while Miss La Blanche, very unlady-like, put out her tongue at the retreating madam.

Miss Trudell took a fit of laughing. She thoroughly enjoyed the joke.

"Where's Clem?" inquired the blonde.

"She's up in bed," responded Miss La Blanche. "She's done for; played out."

The colored maid, hearing the controversy from the passage, retired to the kitchen, as soon as she saw her mistress wending her way upstairs.

Just at this moment, the colored sentinel, who kept watch at the door, put his head in and announced, "Some gentlemen in the parlor."

"Go tell them the house is on the bum, closed for the

night!" shouted the big blonde. He stood for a moment in blank astonishment.

"Didn't you hear me!" yelled the blonde.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then go and tell them." In a few moments the sound of retiring footsteps could be heard in the hall.

"Now, girls," said the blonde. "I propose we make a night of it. What say you if we get some wine?"

"I'm agreeable," remarked Miss Volterchamp. "But who's going to pay for it, and how are we going to get it?"

"Oh, we'll get it," said the blonde, who seemed bent on mischief. "You follow me." She went toward the kitchen where the colored woman had made some preparation for early refreshments, which it was customary to serve to wealthy patrons. A kettle was singing on the stove.

"Dinah," said the blonde, "we want some wine."

"Is there gentlemen in the parlor," inquired the colored maid.

"No, we want it for ourselves."

"O no, Miss, you wouldn't expect me to do that?"

"Yes we do!" exclaimed Miss Volterchamp, who took second part only to the blonde.

"I'll soon make her give up the key!" yelled the blonde, grabbing the handle of the boiling kettle, which was so hot, that she had to let go of it, but, reaching for a towel which she placed around the handle, she lifted the kettle in a menacing manner toward the colored maid. "Now give up the key, or I'll scald you."

"Wait till I see the mistress."

"Mistress nobody, you give us the key and be quick about it."

The colored wench, seeing the desperation in the eyes of the big blonde, thought discretion the better part of valor,

and surrendered the key. The four women went to the closet and each took out two bottles of champagne. After the big blonde's three partners in the raid had walked out with the wine in their hands, the blonde took the key from the inside of the kitchen door, locked it on the outside, after telling the colored woman to stay there till they wanted her, and, as all the rear rooms in the Blomgarten seraglio had barred windows, she was as much a prisoner as if she was in the bridewell.

There were repeated calls at the Blomgarten mansion. Many inquiries were made for the girl who had created the disturbance at the dance, but to one and all the big blonde sent out the same answer: "We're closed for the night." The colored inside guard knew it was no use appealing to his mistress, who at that time lay like a hog, snoring vigorously. So he turned out the light above the transom which illumined the big red pane of glass over the door, with the number on it, and lay back in his chair.

As the morning advanced other of the madam's boarders began to return, tired and worn out from their excesses at the dance. They were soon informed of the rebellion, with the discomfiture and ignoble retreat of the madam, the story of which they enjoyed immensely and began to share in the festivities. Repeated calls were made on the wine closet, over the protest of the colored maid, who was warned, if she squealed, they would practice a surgical operation on her anatomy that would fix her for all time.

About four in the morning Mugsy arrived. He looked with amazement in the parlor where the entire staff of the house were in an hilarious condition at the time of his entrance, one of the junior members trying to do the highland fling on the back parlor table to the delight of her audience, who were clapping vigorously.

"What the h——l is this!" he exclaimed, looking around for the male patrons who, he expected, were paying liberally for the festivities.

"Is this a hen party?" looking in the direction of the big blonde, who was still able to stand on her feet, glass in hand.

"Come in, Mugsy, take a drink."

"What does this mean?" he said to one of the girls who was closest to him.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Miss Volterchamp, "we've fired the captain, and we're going to scuttle the ship." At this sally many of the girls, who weren't too far gone, laughed heartily.

"Well, I'm going to do a little firing too, and if the whole bunch of you don't go right up to bed while you have light, ye'll be in the dark in five minutes, because I'll turn off the gas. Where's Dinah?"

"We have her in chains," said Miss Volterchamp, who seemed to be of a nautical turn of mind and was well up in pirate lore.

"I think we'll want straight jackets for some of you," retorted Mugsy. "Come, clear out," as he went toward the chandelier to turn off the gas.

"Well, take a drink and we'll go," said Miss La Blanche.

Mugsy, thinking this was the best terms he could make, accepted a glass of wine. Those of the damsels who were able began to climb the stairs. Three or four who were unable to locomote lay where they fell. The colored maid had to sleep in her prison until the key of the kitchen was found after a diligent search next morning. So ended the rebellion in the regal house of the Blomgarten.

CHAPTER XIV.

A QUANDARY.

Madam Blomgarten retired the night of the revolt with a troubled mind. It was the first time in her vast experience in her profession when she had to confront a problem of so difficult a solution. Her proud spirit as a ruler of women had met a check, as they say when hostile forces are repulsed by a determined enemy which showed more strength than was expected when attacked. Four of her leading ladies had bidden her defiance; each of them had numerous male friends and, as she thought, "probably if I attempt to regulate one or all of them, others in the house may take sides against me. As for Clementina, the most I can do with her is to give her a lecture, though she is the one most to blame. I will see Mr. Dent about her anyway and talk to him, though I feel it won't do me much good, as he's her steady patron, and his influence with the men higher up is paramount, owning, as he does, the leading house where supplies were purchased and a liberal commission dispensed to the political managers." After ruminating for a long time as to what should be her line of action in the morning when she had to face the insurgents, she resolved to sleep over it. So, turning in her couch, her troubled mind soon found repose in slumber.

Having retired long before the accustomed hour, in the morning through the commotion in her subjects, she awoke at an early hour. The clock on the mantel chimed seven, and much as she would have liked to have enjoyed a much

longer snooze, try as she would, the god Morpheus seemed to have deserted her, as she had turned from the god of Israel many, many years before. So she lay thinking and tossing in her bed till the clock struck eight, when she resolved to get up. Pulling on her stockings and placing her feet in a pair of slippers, and winding a commodious dressing gown over her well developed figure, she descended toward the parlor floor. In taking a glance into the parlor as she was passing, her eyes were gladdened by the multiplicity of empty champagne bottles that littered the table and of many that stood like silent sentries after the fierce but, as she thought, profitable carousal of the night before. Immediately her heart softened to the delinquents, when she contemplated the profits. She essayed to count the bottles, but as they were so numerous and in so many parts of the commodious parlors she gave it up, feeling sure that Dinah, who was custodian of the wine and liquor supply, had kept faithful tab. "They must have had a h—l of a time," she thought, as she noticed the unaccustomed disorder. "I suppose the house is full of patrons." So she resolved then and there to let bygones be bygones and at the noon day lunch, if the rebels showed up, to pass the fracas of the night before as a joke, not even mentioning the matter to Mr. Dent, unless he himself should revert to the question.

"I'll awake Dinah and have her make me a cup of coffee. I suppose she, poor woman, was up all night too." Going to a little cubby hole at the rear of the house where Dinah bunked, she was surprised to find it vacant. "I suppose, poor girl, she was so played out that she went to sleep in the kitchen," was her next thought. On descending the stairs and reaching the kitchen, she tried to open the door, but, on finding it fast, she knocked loudly, crying, "Dinah,

open the door!" The voice from the inside shouted, "I can't, I am locked in!"

"Locked in?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Who locked you in?"

"The boarders, ma'am."

"Why did you let them!" shrieked the madam.

"I couldn't help it, ma'am. They threatened to scald me with the boiling water, and to do all sorts of cruel things to me. I believed they would have murdered me if I resisted them."

"Why didn't you run out and cry for help? Where was Mugsy?"

"I s'pose he was at the dance, ma'am."

"Well, where was the colored porter?"

"They told him to go to h——l, ma'am, and clear out, as the place was closed for the night. So I don't know what became of him."

"Were there no gentlemen?"

"Yes, ma'am. I could hear the bell ringing frequently, but they didn't seem to open the door."

"My God! this is outrageous! Don't you know where the key is?"

"No, ma'am, how could I tell when they locked me in and took the key with them?"

Madam Blomgarten burst into a paroxysm of passion, giving vent to her feeling in language which, if published literally, would effectually prohibit this work from having access through the United States mail.

A sudden thought striking her, she turned and ran as fast as her corpulency, age, and passion would permit her, up the first flight of stairs. As she passed one of the bed rooms, she looked in and saw four of her lady boarders

lying heads and tails on the one bed, with all their clothes on. Climbing the next flight of stairs, panting for want of breath, she rushed into the room where Mugsy was sleeping and, grabbing him by the hair of his head, shouted, "Get up!"

He awoke with a start, seeing the frantic condition of his mistress.

"What's up!" he exclaimed.

"What's up?" she replied, with a sneer, "what isn't up?"

"Oh, I know," he replied, sitting up in bed.

"Well, tell me where were you to allow this carrying on in my house? What do I pay you for?"

"Why, I didn't get home until four. You know I had to stay at the dance to see that no one molested any of our girls."

"Well, when you got home, what did you see?"

"Why, every b—— in the place was rip-roaring drunk and hilarious. I raced them all to bed; that's as many as were able to climb the stairs,—saw that the house was locked up and, finding that you had gone to bed, I turned in."

"Did you see Dinah?"

"No, I supposed she had gone to bed."

"Well, she hadn't. They locked her in the kitchen after robbing the wine closets, so she can't get out. Do you know where the key is?"

"No, I don't."

"Get up and find it, then." Madam, turning on her heel, went down the one flight of stairs, and, entering her own room, fell into a rocker exhausted by the intensity of her passion.

Mugsy arose, and, on going to the kitchen, consulted the colored girl as to who had the key. She couldn't remem-

ber who had it last, but laid the blame on the big blonde, who, she said, was the worst of all.

Mugsy sought the room usually occupied by that aggressive lady, but found it occupied by others. He ultimately found her in another apartment in bed with two of her sisters, all sound asleep. He grabbed her by the shoulder; she let out a grunt. "Wake up!" he shouted. "Where's the key of the kitchen?"

"I don't know. Let me sleep."

"Get up and find the key."

"No, I'll not. If you want the key, go find it yourself," turning over.

Mugsy could hardly restrain himself from reaching her one, but contented himself by placing his hand in the pocket of her dress, but found no key. He then visited a number of the bed-rooms, making inquiries and being met with evasive or angry answers from the sleepy damsels who were so ruthlessly disturbed. He finally thought he would see if it was in the parlor. After a diligent search he found it amid some of the empty champagne bottles, and he released Dinah, telling her to hurry up and bring some coffee up to the missus' room, with a little brandy, as he was afraid to go near her,—possibly she was in a fit, if not croaked.

"I'm going to get a couple of hours sleep. This life is getting a little too strenuous for me."

Dinah then hastily prepared the coffee, and with some toast and a half tumbler of brandy went up to the madam's room, where she found her in a total collapse, the reaction having set in. After advising her to lie down for a couple of hours, as it was not likely that any of her people would be up for some time, she left her.

CHAPTER XV.

A CONFERENCE.

Madam Blomgarten remained in her room for some time, meditating on what was the best to be done under the circumstances. She was in no mood to meet the rebels who, she feared, were arrayed solidly against her. She resolved to seek counsel outside. So, dressing herself in her glad clothes, she determined to visit the great firm of Dent & Company, where, on her arrival, she was ushered into the private office of the head of the firm, being well known to the ushers of that establishment as a very valuable customer.

Mr. Dent greeted her, very cordially.

"Come in, Sadie, and sit down. What can we do for you today?"

"I am in great trouble, Mr. Dent. Your lady friend, Miss Montague, has upset my whole establishment. I suppose you heard how she acted at the ball last night?"

"I was there and saw the commotion. She must have had a grudge against that fellow Rosenthal. Was it he that first brought her to your house?"

"Yes, but she has done real well since she came. I've introduced her to the very best society, including yourself, Mr. Dent, and I cannot, for the life of me, see what cause she has for complaint."

"Ah, Sadie, I think your sense of propriety and morals is somewhat lax. She has not got over the outrage that was perpetrated upon her in spite of all your coaching, nor is

she likely to. I have heard something of her story, and while you know I am far from being a saint, and conform to the conditions as we find them in this wicked city, I would still take it as a justifiable act if she killed him."

"Oh, Mr. Dent, you are somewhat of a sentimentalist. You'll some day blossom out as a reformer."

"No telling, but at the present time I am a business man and, though a man of the world, I never can get away from the fact that I have a wife and children, two of whom are girls. I, however, saw the performance last night from a safe distance, and must admit it was deplorable. But I suppose you came for my advice, and I will give it to you. You grin and bear it. Pass it up as the act of a drunken woman,—I suppose she had drunk a lot of champagne?"

"Yes, but I haven't told you the worst yet. When we got home and I started in to give her a lecture for her unlady-like conduct, Misses La Blanche, Trudell and Volterschamp took sides with her and bid me defiance in my own home; but worst of all, when that big blonde came in, the big cow, she was worse than all, and began to abuse me most unmercifully, so that I had to leave them and go to my own room."

"A judicious retreat, Sadie; you deserve credit."

"But worse than that. As soon as my back was turned they attacked my colored maid, threatening to take her life if she wouldn't give up the key of the wine closets, so she had to give up the key and then they raided the closets, helping themselves to wine by the dozens of bottles, locking my colored girl in the kitchen, so that she couldn't appeal to me or get any assistance. When Mugsy arrived home, the whole bunch of them was in the parlors, most of them speechless from the wine."

"I suppose they'd had lots of male company?"

"Not a man. They told the colored man I have on the front door that the place was closed for the night, so that he might as well clear out, which it seems he did."

"Where was Clementina all this time?"

"She was up in bed."

"Well, you can't blame her for the trouble in the parlors."

"Yes I do, for if she hadn't caused the trouble at the dance every thing would have gone on in proper order. And look at the success I would have; my house would have been crowded day and night for weeks after. Now, I'm afraid things are ruined."

"Not so bad as that, Sadie, you'll still be able to do business at the old stand, but I have something to tell you and I want you to act promptly. After Ike had left the hall, accompanied by some six or seven of his pals, they went to the saloon where they hold out. Ike was mad, and swore by the bones of his ancestors he'd get even with the cat. First, he vowed he'd kill her, a praiseworthy intent in the estimation of some of his pals, who are in the same line of business as himself; but, after they had caroused for a certain time, he came to the conclusion that killing her would be too humane an act, so he resolved to disfigure her. 'I'll make her so that when she looks at herself in the glass she'll hate herself.' I guess that he means he'll either do it himself, if the cowardly skunk has the guts, or he'll get some of his pals to do it. Either slash her with a knife, or throw acid in her face. So I want you, when you go home, to tell Mugsy to hunt him up. He can find him and tell him that, if either he or any of his pals lay a finger on Miss Montague, or if she's injured in the near future by any person, no matter whether he is to blame or not, all the lawyers on earth or in hell won't save him, and that we'll

see he even can't get a bondsman capable of putting up enough security for all the charges we'll lay against him. Damn him, I'll keep him in jail till he rots. Now you know me; so see you attend promptly to this matter. Have Mugsy hunt him up as soon as you get home, as the fellow who gave me the information tells me there is no time to lose. I'll expect to hear from you tomorrow, how Mugsy fulfilled his mission, and, as for your injured feelings, you'll probably have a rush of business after the annual ball that will more than compensate you for your losses; and as part payment for Clementina's share of the loss here's a twenty-dollar bill with which you can buy yourself something on the way home."

"But how can I meet the girls?"

"Let on you forgot it, or pass it off as a joke."

Sadie Blomgarten left the private office of Dent & Company far from satisfied, but could not see any other way out of the difficulty. She did some shopping for herself, it being a breach of contract to purchase anything for any of the girls except in the prescribed stores. She spent the afternoon visiting different establishments, not desiring to be home until supper was ready, over which it was customary for her to preside. Arriving home, the colored man at the door let her in.

"I'll want to see you later!" she exclaimed. "Is Mugsy in?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Tell him I want to see him right away in the parlor."

"Yes, ma'am."

On Mugsy's arrival, she told him the instructions she had received, and informed him to go right away, find Rosenthal, and inform him what to expect if any injury was done to Miss Montague, by either himself or anyone else, whether

they were pals or not. "Tell him that no alibi will save him. Now go, and here's a five spot for you. Perhaps you may have trouble finding him this early."

"Won't after supper do?"

"No, go at once, get your supper outside."

"I'll find him," replied Mugsy, "and if he gives me any lip I'll forestall the bosses by kicking the stuffing out of him in advance."

Madam Blomgarten then put off her fur overcoat and repaired to the dining room, where supper was waiting. The bell was ringing, and the girls came trooping in and took their regular places. Madam Blomgarten, seeing that Clementina was absent, inquired as to her absence.

"She's in bed," answered one of the girls.

"Has she been attended to?" inquired the madam, portraying unwonted interest.

"Yes, we took her up some tea and toast," she said. "She was only tired and would stay in bed for the day."

"Well, if she is sick, I want the doctor brought to her right away."

This unusual interest surprised many of the girls, who wondered at her change of heart from the night before when she would have liked to strangle her.

The madam, however, in spite of the instructions Dent had given her, was far from pleasant, not even sociable.

As the supper proceeded, she noticed some of the elder women had on a look of stern defiance, while the younger ones kept whispering to one another something which caused an occasional titter. One girl in particular, whose risibility was easily aroused, couldn't keep from laughing.

The madam, becoming irritated, said, "I suppose you're laughing at me, Miss Angeline."

"No, ma'am. Ophelia was telling me a funny story."

“I know she was probably talking about me, and I want this foolishness to stop, and not to hear another word about it, there’s the bell ringing, perhaps one of you had better go into the parlor and see who’s wanted. I’m going to dress, but before doing so I want to say one word: I think some of you girls haven’t treated me as I deserve.” With that she left the room.

That night, the house of Blomgarten was crowded as it never was before; the girls seemed to rival one another in their efforts to bring grist to Madam Blomgarten’s mill, she being kept busy introducing strangers, many of whom inquired for the young lady who had displayed such energy at the First Ward Democratic Ball; but to all who desired an introduction they received the same stereotyped answer: “Miss Montague is out this evening, would you care to meet Miss ——? She’s a charming girl.”

CHAPTER XVI.

REST FOR THE WEARY

On the morning after the day Madam Blomgarten had held counsel with Mr. Dent, Martha Hill, (as we know her), had an elaborate breakfast brought to her bedside by the colored maid, who, after inquiring how she felt, received the answer: "I am tired and weary."

"Madam told me to tell you that if you don't feel well you had to stay in bed, and that she would see that no one disturbed you."

This solicitude of the madam in her behalf was somewhat of a surprise, as she expected her owner to pour the vials of her wrath upon her at the earliest opportunity.

"I suppose the madam is very angry at me," addressing the colored woman who lingered in the room, seemingly to give the girl in the bed close attention.

"You bet she was at first; she was mad at everybody, especially at the boarders who took your part."

"Who were they?"

"Why, all the girls, but they behaved very bad to me."

"What did they do to you?"

"Ebery thing, Miss. I thought they'd murder me." And Dinah, seeing Martha was interested, went on to describe what took place from the time Martha Hill retired on the morning of the ball, until the time of Madam Blomgarten's return after her interview with Mr. Dent, in the most graphic manner of which she was capable. The recital made Martha Hill smile, despite her aching head and heart.

"I suppose, Dinah, when the madam came down the next morning, and found out what they had done, she was furious."

"That's no name for it, Miss. She was crazy; I thought she'd take a fit! Your tea's getting cold, Miss; let me help you. Come, take a little of this ham and eggs."

"No, Dinah, I am too sick."

"This tea will do you good. Come now, Miss Montague, let me help you," putting the cup to the girl's lips.

"I am interested in your story, Dinah. I suppose she abused the girls frightfully, when she saw them?"

"No, she didn't; she skipped out before any of them was up, and didn't come home until supper time, and then she was as nice as nip. The first thing she done was to inquire about you, and said she hoped you had been attended to, and gave me orders that, if you were ill, our doctor had to be sent for at once. I told her that I only thought you were tired, and would be all right after you had a little rest."

"Well, see that she's not disturbed," she said. But I must be going. Can I bring you up anything?"

"No. Tell them down stairs that I will not get up to-day, nor see any one."

During the morning, Madam Blomgarten came to visit the patient.

"Well, my dear, how are you now?" in a most solicitous tone, which fairly took the breath away from the protégé, who expected at least a coldness from her mistress. There was not, however, a particle of malice in her voice.

"I am sick and tired."

"I don't wonder; you get yourself so excited. I didn't think it was in you, Clem."

"I had good cause, had I not?"

"Now, Miss Montague, you can't expect me to go into that subject. You understand my business, and since you came here I have tried to treat you as well as I could. I have only introduced you to friends that would prove valuable to you."

"I can never be reconciled to such friends, and I did not come here of my own free will. I was brought here by that vile creature I only saw for the second time, the night of the dance."

"Well, I didn't come up to quarrel with you, nor am I going to; I came to see if you wanted for anything or were you going to get up this evening to meet your friends. Many have inquired for you."

"No, I am too sick to get up, and don't want to see any one. I want to be let alone."

"Suppose Mr. Dent calls; what am I going to say to him?"

"Tell him I have left," turning her face from the madam, who bit her lip to hide her chagrin.

"Oh, I can't do that; you wouldn't want me to lie."

The girl turned in the bed and gazed aghast at her mistress, who professed such scruples about telling an untruth.

"I see, my dear," addressing her slave in the most patronizing manner. "You want a rest. Should you want for anything, or change your mind about seeing any of your friends, just ring your bell, and I will see that your wishes are complied with."

"I want only to be let alone."

"Have your own way then, I'll see you'll not be disturbed." After which she took her departure in a mood widely different from the one she had to dissemble.

Martha Hill could not understand or account for the mildness of her mistress' manner, after the violence of her attack upon her the night before. She wondered what had brought about the change.

Along in the afternoon Mugsy peered in at the door. "May I come in?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"I hope you are not very sick, Miss?" smiling at her.

"Not so sick as weary. I feel grateful to you, however, Mugsy, for the way you came to my defense, when the young man wanted the crowd to pull me out of the box."

"Don't mention it, Miss. I'd do more than that for you. Your friend is my friend."

"Who is that? What friend have I that's your friend?" she inquired earnestly.

"Mr. Dent. He's stuck on you, Clem, and he's one of the big fellows. What he says goes, and as long as you keep him on your list you needn't care for any one."

"What do you mean? How is Mr. Dent so influential?" displaying great interest.

"You know, Miss, I'm not supposed to tell tales out of school, or even recognize any of the swells that come here, but I'm on to a lot of them. I don't mind putting you on, as I know you wouldn't give me away; in fact, Miss Montague, I feel somewhat friendly to you, and I'm sorry I spoke so harsh to you when Sheeney Ike first brought you here. But it's part of the work I'm expected to do, and what I'm paid for. I know you're different from the rest of the Judys we have here, and I know you're not happy. You still have more friends than any two of them."

"Such friends! don't mention them. They all come for a purpose. We girls all look alike to them."

"You can't say that of Mr. Dent. He is the real goods. Do you know he's been helping you out of the trouble you got yourself in the night of the dance?"

"How so?" raising herself on her elbow on the bed, and looking intently at her informant.

"I'll tell you, but mind it's in strict confidence. Dent wouldn't like it, and the madam, if she thought you knew too much, would want to know where you got your information, and she'd guess I was the only one could tell you, so she'd probably can me."

"You can rely on me, Mugsy."

"It was this way: After Sheeney Ike and his pals left the hall, they went to the saloon where they hang out. Ike's pals looked upon him as a much-abused man. Ike himself felt he'd been degraded in such high-class company, especially as some of the girls who contribute to his board bill saw you douse him. Well, to make a long story short, after the drinks were served, Ike's pals waited to hear what he had to say. You know Ike's a leader among them, so he swore he'd have your life. But after a few more drinks, and on the advice of his pals, he decided there was too much risk in killing you. He finally came to the conclusion he would disfigure you for life. He boasted he'd make you hate yourself, when you looked in a glass."

"What did he mean by that?" the girl turning pale with apprehension.

"Why, slash you with a knife, or throw acid in your face."

"My God! would he do that?" falling back in the bed in terror of her impending danger.

"They'd do anything, that gang. I'm bad enough, the Lord knows, but I'm a saint in comparison to them white slavers."

"Tell me, Mugsy, what have I to do to protect myself?" her breath coming short in her excitement.

"No danger, Miss. Your friend Dent attended to them."

"What control can he have over such ruffians?"

"If any of them even looks crooked at you, he'll fix them for all time."

"Tell me, how can he do that? I am anxious to know."

"Well, mum's the word, if I tell you."

"Yes, sure."

"You have heard of the men higher up, havn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's one of the highest up, near the top, and, getting the tip of what Ike said he'd do to you from one of the push, he had the madam send me out to find Ike, and notify him that if either he or any of his band of white slavers, confidence men, or blackmailers, laid a finger on you, or if even anything happened to you in the near future, whether they were to blame or not, he'd have the whole crowd sent over the road. And as for Rosenthal, he'd keep him in jail until he'd rot; in fact, he'd have the state's attorney file so many charges against them, that it would take the First National Bank to furnish enough bonds to get them out. Even then he would see to their conviction. So I set out and found Ike, and delivered my message. At first he was a little stiff, so I took him by the neck, and I said, 'You dirty little descendant from Judas Iscariot, they'll have to be first to get you. If I get you first, I'll kick the entrails out of you. I'll make you so that they'll have to take your remains away in a bag. As it is, I have a notion to begin on you now.' He tried to get away from me, but I held him until the skunk told me it was all off. 'Well, go tell your pals so, and if you don't I'll see you again.' So

you need have no fear, Miss, I'll make him eat out of your hand, if you want me."

Martha Hill could not help but smile in the face of so doughty a champion.

"I must be off. There's the missus shouting," extending his hand to the girl in bed, who gratefully grasped it.

"Take a good rest, and count on me as your friend from this out," were his parting words.

Late in the afternoon Mr. Dent called. He inquired of the colored man if Mugsy was in.

"Yes, sir. I'll find him for you."

On Mugsy's arrival, Dent's impatient inquiry was: "Did Sadie send you out on a mission for me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you find the party I wanted you to?"

"Yes, sir, and I put the fear of God in his heart."

"Mugsy, that fellow has little fear of God, it's fear of jail he dreads."

"Well, sir, when I got through with him he imagined he could hear the gates closing behind him, and more I told him, that if either he or any of his gang molested Miss Montague they'd be lucky if they reached jail, as it would be most likely coffins they'd want."

Mugsy gave a highly colored description of his interview with Rosenthal, which made Dent laugh.

"Good boy, Mugsy," he said. "If ever you want a friend count on me, and here's a little token of my appreciation," placing a ten-dollar bill in his hand.

"Thank you, sir."

"Anything further in reference to the matter we've been talking about, come and let me know. Where's Clem now?"

"She's up in bed, sir. She's sick."

Dent shook hands with Mugsy, went straight up the stairs, and entered Martha Hill's bedroom without being announced.

The girl was sound asleep. Dent gazed on her. He saw a smile illumine on her face. He guessed she was having a pleasant dream, probably of happier days, ere she left her virtuous home and faithful friends to seek employment in this city, where justice is not only blind but paralyzed by the influence of vicious politicians and their accommodating judges.

For a moment Dent's conscience stung him. He thought of his own two daughters at home when his better nature came in conflict with the polygamous instinct. He thought to himself she is a beautiful toy, something to amuse and entertain. His soliloquy was brought to a close by Martha Hill opening her eyes and gazing into his face. "Clem, old girl, I hear you're under the weather."

"Yes, Mr. Dent, I am more weary than sick."

"I am sorry to hear that," sitting on the bed beside her. "It would seem as if this life was too strenuous for you."

"I am sick of this calling."

"And of me, I suppose."

"Yes, under the circumstances, though I must admit you have been a good friend to me, as such friends go."

"Come now, don't get despondent."

"How can I help it?"

"Cheer up I just dropped in to see how you were after the fracas the other night, and to tell you to never heed any threats that that dirty little Jew may make against you, and if there is anything you want to let me know, or if you have any trouble with the madam, you tell Mugsy, you can rely upon him, and he'll let me know. Come, now, don't be disheartened."

Martha Hill began to cry.

Dent continued. "Come now, Miss Montague, bad as I am, I can't stand a woman's tears. So I must be going. I'll be in again in a few days, when I hope to find you more cheerful. Good bye!" He took her in his arms and kissed her.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INEVITABLE

Clem Montague stays in her room for three consecutive days, during which time she hears much interesting information, and gets assiduous attention; dainty meals being brought up to her bedside. She receives many calls from her sisters in misfortune.

The big blonde brought a smile to her face on her first visit, when she gave her version of how they had put it over "the old cat" by which uncomplimentary title she designated her mistress.

Madam Blomgarten was remarkably solicitous in her inquiry as to how Clem felt; her principal motive being to find out when the young lady would be ready to attend to business. The madam, being of the earth earthy, felt she was suffering some pecuniary loss by the indisposition of her most profitable assistant in her well regulated resort—as a very distinguished public official living in those days desired it should be, his plea being "you cannot suppress the social evil, but you can regulate it," and he kept on with the aid of kindred politicians regulating it, till the Great Regulator of all relegated him.

On the fourth day, Miss Montague, wearying of the bed, arose and dressed. The madam happened to meet her on the landing. She was lavish in her professions of solicitude as to her physical condition.

"I hope you feel better, Clem?" in a tone in which a

mother might be likely to address a sick daughter. "Now, girly, I want you to be more careful and don't get yourself so excited. You look a little pale to me."

"I feel all right," was Martha's reply to her many queries, and she moved on to the back parlor, where some of the girls were lounging, all of whom gave her a hearty and sincere welcome to their midst.

Mugsy, on meeting her, put on the blandest smile his coarse countenance would permit, in his inquiry as to her condition. His interest in her was due to the fact that she was the chosen houri of the Boss, and, since receiving the commission to hunt up Rosenthal and lay down the law to him, he felt it part of his duty to assume the position of protector to her; not that she needed any special protection, but, knowing her influence over Mr. Dent, it might prove worth something to him. He was anxious for every opportunity to show his prowess and devotion in her behalf. His zeal on one occasion nearly got him into serious trouble. A wealthy young rowdy, a son of one of our first families, was insolently paying his advances to her and using language not to be tolerated in a well regulated brothel. Mugsy came into the parlor in conformity with his duty as bouncer, and mildly remonstrated with him, knowing him as he did, and his standing in society. He refused to leave the parlor or cease his annoyance of Miss Montague. So the only resort left was to put him out. The young gentleman resisting with all his might, Mugsy had to use force, so he dragged the obstreperous one toward the rear entrance—the route by which all ejections took place. On reaching the alley the young hopeful became combative, and he was found by the watchman next morning lying in the rear of the Blomgarten house, badly disfigured and unconscious. When the ambulance came to take him away, the police

were in doubt as to whether they should take him to the hospital or to the morgue.

An investigation followed, which caused madam Blomgarten some annoyance, who in turn censured Miss Montague, as if she was to blame.

She even had the idea of getting rid of Mugsy, or offering him up as a sacrifice.

Mugsy had recourse to his friend Mr. Dent, who, on hearing his story and some corroborative testimony from his favorite courtesan, promptly interviewed the madam in reference to the matter, telling her, at the conclusion of the interview, to shut up; which she did effectively, at the same time adding, "I will have my attorney watch the matter."

The parents of the boy, fearing a scandal, and hoping it would be a warning to him, dropped the matter entirely.

Whenever Mr. Dent came to pay his favorite a visit, should he happen to meet Mugsy, who, as a rule, was found on the first floor, and frequently near the entrance, his first inquiry would be:

"How's Clem, is she in?" If the answer was "Yes," he would follow with "Is she engaged? If not, tell her I want to see her." And after giving Mugsy a tip, which he invariably did, he made his way to Clementina's room to await her arrival.

Mugsy went in search of her, and, on finding her, whispered, "The Boss is upstairs; he wants to see you."

On one occasion, before leaving, Dent inquired of Mugsy if he had heard anything of the Ike Rosenthal gang, and if he thought they still had it in for Clem.

"Nothing doing, sir. I have met some of them, and tried to sound them, but I could not get them to refer to the matter. I some time feel as if I wish they would. If

they do, and its a knock, I'll make the bunch eat out of her hand."

Dent smiled on Mugsy, and said, "Keep a lookout anyhow, and, if there's any trouble, you know you can rely upon me."

"Thank you, sir."

"Clementina Montague was by far the most attractive girl in Madam Blomgarten's establishment. Young and ladylike, of a retiring disposition, she was held in high esteem by the wealthy young profligates who patronized the institution in which she was a reluctant victim. Her popularity had its penalties. Outraged nature began to drive the bloom from her cheeks, which Madam Blomgarten persisted in her restoring by an increased use of rouge. So that, ere two years had passed in Madam Blomgarten's, she was like a faded flower, and the madam began to weigh the time when she would be more of an incumbrance than an asset. Dent, however, long past the middle age, when the blood begins to run cold, still admired her, and was her steady patron and supporter. This secured for her the fealty of Mugsy, who guarded her as carefully as would a watch-dog.

In the early stages of her career, Madam Blomgarten tried to reserve her for her wealthy patrons. Should what the madam designated a "piker" try to make advances to her, if she caught Clem's eye, she frowned and shook her head. If the man proved persistent and Clem could not conveniently refuse him, the madam would send for her, as if she was already engaged. When she arrived, the madam would say, "Pass him up, he's no good."

At the present stage of her existence, that we are now chronicling, Madam Blomgarten expected her to hustle for

patronage, as she had younger and fresher recruits to look after who required her fostering care.

During her two years in the bagnio, she was seldom on the street, the dread of being recognized by some one who knew her, her parents or friends, keeping her indoors. The confinement also told upon her once vigorous constitution, as did the longing for news from home of how the loved ones were getting on. She wondered if Matt Howard was married. She hoped he was, and happy. Many were the tears she shed, the sighs she gave in the seclusion of her room, when she was alone. "But it is all over," she would say to herself. "My only hope is they may think me dead!"

And, dear reader, how many thousands of girls, led by the deceit of men or the cunning of monsters, who, having been brought to a life of shame, have not been tortured with similar thoughts! Martha Hill was no exception.

Martha Hill had been three years in the service of the Blomgarten woman, when she was stricken with a disease peculiar to such institutions, and the inevitable fate of all who persist in a life of shame. The girl herself was ignorant of the fact, or the consequences thereof, until she had brought misery to others.

Dinah, the colored woman, suspicious of the cause of Miss Montague's indisposition, learned the facts, and made the announcement to her mistress, who nearly foamed at the mouth when she heard the news.

"My God!" she exclaimed. "What trouble that girl has given me! When was Mr. Dent here?"

"Three or four nights ago."

"Oh, dear me! Oh, dear me! What will become of us? I must get rid of her right away. Reaching for the telephone, and getting Central, she asked for a number; after a lapse of a few seconds she got a response.

"Is that you ——?" The answer seemed satisfactory.

"There is one of my girls gone wrong, I want you to have her removed right away." * * * * "To the hospital, to be sure. Yes! Yes! Call me up as soon as you have made arrangements."

She hung up the receiver, and began to review all the troubles she had since Martha Hill was betrayed, drugged, and enslaved, in her house of hell; overlooking both the profit and prestige she had brought to the establishment.

The telephone rang. She placed the receiver to her ear. "Yes, this is Sadie. All right. Thanks. Good-bye."

"Dinah, you tell her to get dressed and ready to go. Good riddance! And tell Mugsy to get a cab."

The colored woman went to Miss Montague's room and informed her of her mistress' wishes.

"Where are they going to send me?"

"To the hospital."

"Do you think I'm very bad, Dinah?"

"Yes, I think you are, Miss."

Martha burst into tears.

"Dere's no use you crying, Miss. I'm very sorry for you, but it's best you go."

The girl dressed and descended to the back parlor, where the madam was awaiting her. She was met with a frown. No semblance of pity or compassion was to be seen on the face of the worse than harlot.

"I understand you are very ill?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You should have exercised more care."

"Martha Hill, with her head bowed down, paid no attention to her censure.

"I am going to get you into the hospital—a bill of expense to me, I suppose," as she looked sternly at her slave.

“Mugsy will be here in a few minutes with a cab for you. I see you are ready to go.”

The girl had no reply to make. Broken in spirit, the victim of a loathsome disease, she had no recourse, but to bow to her owner's sovereign will.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE INVALID

Clementina Montague was but two weeks in the hospital, when a fellow patient loaned her a newspaper. In scanning it over she noticed an item under the caption:

“ A SCANDAL IN HIGH SOCIETY.”

It read as follows:

There was a fracas yesterday evening in the Unity Club, which startled the members of that eminently respectable and exclusive organization. The facts are, as far as our reporter could learn:

A young member, a scion of one of our best families, vigorously laid his cane over the head and shoulders of another member much his senior in years, and would have, no doubt, done him serious injury, if it were not for the prompt interference of other members of the club who were in close proximity to the combatants at the time. The parties to the fray immediately left the building, on being separated. Our correspondent, learning the names of the two parties to the dispute, visited the home of the younger one for the purpose of obtaining his version of the affair, but was informed that the party he sought had no information to give out. On visiting the palatial residence of the elder gentleman, he was informed that Mr. D—— was not at home, and it did not seem as if the butler, who answered the door, knew anything whatsoever of the affair. The mystery attached to the matter is, firstly, that the two com-

batants are closely connected by marriage, and, secondly, that it was very apparent that the elder man had given no provocation, at least, on the night of the fray, that would warrant such an attack. So that our expectant readers, who gloat over such choice morsels of gossip, will have to await further developments which, it is presumed, will be of a sensational character.

Miss Montague's intuitive mind seemed to grasp the situation. She knew that her friend, Dent, was a member of that very exclusive organization, and the news item which gave the letter D—— with a stroke to partly obliterate the identity of one of the parties, confirmed her in the belief that it was no less a personage than her old patron. Each day after, when she could get a paper, she searched the columns diligently to see if there was any further reference to the affair, but could not see any, so she believed it had been but a misunderstanding which had amicably been settled, or probably she had been mistaken in her surmise and that her friend Dent was in no way implicated.

It was a consoling thought to her after all. As such friends go, Dent was the most loyal and considerate of all her numerous male acquaintances.

She was pleased, one day, to have a visit from the big blonde, who was the only one of her sisters in misfortune who seemed to have either time or inclination to visit her.

"I am so glad to see you, Verona. It is so kind of you to call on me," was Clem's greeting before the blonde had time to place on the table at her bedside the fruit and flowers she had brought with her.

"Well, Clem, how have you been getting on since I saw you last?"

"I have been very sick, and in great pain. What's the news from the house?"

"There's been h—— to pay. Old Dent has got into trouble with his wife's family. Her brother slugged him one evening at the club they both are members of. He hasn't been near the house since you left. But some people have been making inquiries about him. The madam said she didn't know him at all. They laughed at her, and asked her if she knew a young lady by the name of Clementina Montague. Then the madam got on her ear, and told them to get out; she had no information for them. On leaving, one of them remarked, laughingly, "You may have, later."

"What is it all about?" inquired Miss Montague, raising herself on her elbow in the bed.

"Don't you know, you innocent?"

"No!"

The blonde smiled. "You know when you took sick?"

"Yes."

"Didn't Dent visit you, a few days before it developed?"

"Yes."

"Then, that's all there's to it."

The light dawned upon the sick woman, who lay back in bed, covering her head with the sheet to hide her confusion.

The big blonde, who, it seemed, had a big heart, tried to console her.

"Cheer up," she said. "Whatever harm has been done has been done, and can't be helped now, so there's no use of you fretting over it."

"Yes, but think of the misery I have been the cause of to others. I wish I had died first."

"The unintentional cause, girl; the ever dreaded risk of our calling! Few there are who escape, in spite of all our caution, and men who consort with us must take their

chances. You, however, have been particularly unfortunate in having contracted one of the most serious maladies known to medical science."

"Do you think I'll get better, Verona?"

"I hope you will, but, in the meantime, content yourself, and don't do any fretting over Dent. He has made thousands of dollars out of us girls, and he's in a position to take care of himself. And, if he isn't, you can't help him. But I must be going. I see the nurse is looking impatiently at me, so good-bye. I will call to see you again in a few days."

Clementina Montague lay back in her bed, gazing into space. Her whole past career seemed to rise vividly before her: her happy virtuous home, her departure, the fatal meeting, the attic. She shuddered at the thought of the brutal treatment she had received while there, her initiation into the society of the courtesans, her introduction to Dent, with its ultimate disastrous results, the blank future before her—it all seemed spread before her as in a panorama. At length nature's great restorer came to her relief—sleep, oblivion—but no! she dreamed, as she had often done before, of the loved ones at home, until rudely awakened by the nurse, who aroused her so that the interne might make his daily examination as to her condition. When he was through, he looked significantly at the nurse. "You will have to give her a little stimulant," he said, as he left, "she don't seem to improve."

Weak as she was, she was eager to scan the papers. She was anxious to learn if there was any news in reference to the Dent case, and it helped to pass the time. The nurse on her rounds one day observed her reading the paper. She took it out of her hand. "I cannot let you read, Miss; you want rest."

"But I am interested in something I thought I might see in the papers."

"That may be so, but the only thing we are interested in is your recovery. We also object to you having any visitors, as we notice, after they have left, your fever has increased."

"I have not many who come to see me."

"Have you no relations? Of course, we would not refuse them, but in this ward, in particular, we do not encourage any to come who are not intimately connected, or specially interested in the patient."

"I have no relatives, and now it seems there are but few who care to come to see me."

"There is that big woman who comes, she seems interested in you, we tried to deter her from coming, as we noticed after her visits you seem to be more despondent and your fever increases, but she has a special permit. We must, however, discourage any lengthy stay on her part."

"It is very kind of you, nurse. I know what you are saying is best for me; but, as she seems to be about the only friend I have left, don't stop her from coming to see me."

"No, we won't; but you tell her yourself not to stay too long." A hard thing for the poor, sick girl to do, who looked anxiously forward to her visits.

On the next occasion of Verona's visit to the hospital, ere she could deposit some cake and fruit she had brought with her, she exclaimed, "I have lots of news for you, Clem; but, if you don't promise you won't get excited, I won't tell you a thing."

Miss Montague raised herself on her elbow on the bed, and, while a sickly smile illumed her face, pointing to a chair, said, "Sit down, Verona, I am so glad to see you, and it's so kind of you to bring me all the nice things you

do. I am afraid I will never be able to repay you for your kindness."

"Don't mention it, girl, but do you know, Clem, they tried to prevent me from coming to see you?"

"So I understand. They don't encourage visitors in this ward, as many of the women in here are in such bad shape. I haven't been able to get around much, but I am told some of them are much disfigured, and people are apt to gaze on them as they pass their cots."

"Well, I suppose that's right, but I have a permit."

"How did you get it, Verona? You must have a 'pull'," smiling.

"It was this way: I have a friend on the County Board, he's a brick, a first-class fellow, and, on one of his visits to the house, I had him in my room, and told him I had a sick friend in the hospital, and that they did not want to let me in to see her."

"I'll see about that," he says. "And the very next day I had a pass by mail. That's going some, isn't it, Clem?"

"Yes, I am sure I am thankful to him also, as, if they wouldn't let you in, I might as well be in the grave where I would, at least, not hear the moans of some of the poor creatures who are in here. But what's the news?"

"You'll first promise me you won't get excited?"

"Yes, I promise."

"Well, Mrs. Dent has got a divorce from Dent, the papers have been full of it, and, in filing her complaint, she made you co-respondent. She herself is away in a sanitarium, but, as you know, her people are very wealthy, and they engaged one of the leading law firms in Chicago to handle her case. Their investigators were around, to see the madam, but she stood pat, positively refusing to give

them any information. It seemed, however, that they didn't need her. I suppose, if they had, they would have made her cough up. Some one, however, had been leaking, as it would seem they had all the dope they wanted. It was first thought it was some of the girls in the place, but they all denied it. Mugsy was furious. He swore if he knew who'd peached he'd cut their hearts out. He has a suspicion it was Ike Rosenthal, or some of his gang, that is at the bottom of it, and furnished the evidence for the complainant. The reason they had not come to see you was Dent had sufficient influence with the politicians who run things to have the house physician certify that you were too low to have you interviewed, that it might cost you your life. So the warden prevented the newspaper men or the lawyers from coming to see you."

Miss Montague began to breathe heavily, and a flush came over her face, as the blonde went on with the narrative. Verona hesitated, seeing the effect her story was causing. "Go on," gasped the invalid.

"When the day of the trial arrived, the court room was crowded, the elite of Chicago was in attendance, believing they would hear something spicy. I got in early, and had a good place. I noticed Rosenthal and some of his pals were present—he had a place within the rail. The Dent family's doctor was pointed out to me. He was in conference with her lawyers. As soon as the judge put in an appearance we were all on the 'que vive', with our ears cocked, anxious to hear what was going on, but we were sadly disappointed. Dent was there, surrounded by his lawyers. He seemed awfully excited, and was as pale as a ghost. His grit seemed to have left him entirely. The judge asked, 'Are all parties engaged in this case ready to proceed?' One of Mrs. Dent's lawyers said, 'We are ready, your honor.' One of Dent's

lawyers spoke up and said, 'We will be ready in a few moments.'

I noticed one of Dent's lawyers going over to where Mrs. Dent's lawyers were. He had a whispered conversation with them. When he returned to his colleagues, there was more whispering. Then one from each side went up to where the judge sat, and had a whispering with him. After a little talk, he went into his chambers, all the lawyers following him. After a few moments, Mrs. Dent's father was called in, as was also the doctor. The crowd in the court room began to get very impatient. We waited around for a full hour. When we saw the judge come out, followed by all the lawyers, and Mrs. Dent's father, the bailiff in the court rapped for order, and then the judge spoke up, saying, 'The case of Dent versus Dent has been settled; Mrs. Dent being granted a divorce, with full custody of her children; Mr. —, on behalf of his daughter, refusing to accept any alimony; an arrangement has been agreed upon by the representatives of Mr. Dent, and acceptable to the friends of the complainant, by which Mr. Dent has consented to set aside a considerable sum for the benefit of the children.'

'All eyes were on Dent. He seemed very despondent. Mrs. Dent's father and brothers then left the court room, followed by a number who seemed to be friends of her family. I noticed one of her lawyers went over to where Rosenthal stood, and shook hands with him. Ike was laughing at whatever he said to him. Then the crowd in the court room began to file out. I heard one man say, if they hadn't been rich all their dirty linen would have had to be washed in open court. Those who came from a distance went away rip-roaring mad.

'But, Clem, I was nearly forgetting. You remember old

Barclay? They say he's in trouble too. His frau has gone and left him. And Young Johnson—you know him—he was a good friend of yours, and used to spend lots of money. He's gone to Hot Springs to get boiled out."

At this stage of Verona's gossip she observed that Clem Montague was paying no attention to her. She stood up, and looked at the girl in the bed. She was lying on her back, her eyes seemed glazed and directed toward the ceiling. Verona, believing her friend was in a state of collapse, and going toward where a nurse stood, remarked, "I think Miss Montague is not so well today."

"She was all right this morning," replied the nurse.

"Well, you'd better go see her." The nurse went to the cot where Clem lay, and after the most casual examination summoned an interne, who in turn summoned the house physician. He, on looking at his patient, inquired, "Has she had any visitors today?" The nurse responded, "Yes, that woman who has the permit."

"Then, for the future, permit or no permit, you must not allow anyone to see her without my special sanction. She is very low, and has a high fever. Come to my office, and I will give you instructions, and a prescription. In the meantime keep a careful watch over her. I fear her brain is affected."

That night, those close to her bedside heard her constantly appealing to some persons, one by the name of Robert, and another by the name of Matthew Howard, to come and save her, as if she was in constant dread.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONVALESCENT

For a full month after the visit of the big blonde, on which occasion she informed Miss Montague of the divorce proceedings against her old friend and patron, Mr. Dent, Clementina in the delirium of brain fever raved incoherently about certain people. The nurse and attendants oft listened to see if they could hear something that would give them a clue to her relatives whom they might summon to her bedside; the physician, in common with all around her, having little hopes of her recovery.

They knew where she had come from on being brought to the hospital, but, on inquiry there, no information could be gleaned as to who she was, or whence she came.

The madam, on being interviewed, stated she came there like many other of her girls and solicited board. "I took her in and had her for three years. Latterly she was very wayward and careless, in fact I had a lot of trouble with her. I was, however, sorry when she took ill; she was callous and didn't seem to care what trouble she gave to others. I lost some of my best patrons over her."

"Do you think any of your other girls could give us any information about her friends or relatives?"

"No, I don't believe they could. She was very close, and never took any of us into her confidence. I used to have a woman here who seemed to pal in with her. She left about three weeks ago in a tantrum, and is now staying at Miss La Roque's, a French house on Twenty-Second street.

You might see her, but please don't mention my name in the matter, as the woman at La Roque's and I are not very good friends. The woman you want to see is named Verona. She's a big blonde."

"Well, the girl's going to die anyhow, but the warden thought he would try and locate some of her family, so as to give them an opportunity to claim the body if they wanted it."

"Why, what would they want with it? Besides, I thought the surgeons might practice on her."

"No, we have hundreds like her, who die from the same cause. They're a drug on the market. The warden and house physician have an idea she was a girl of some education and refinement, and probably might have some well-to-do friends whom they would like to notify. I'll go over and see the woman on Twenty-second street, and see if she knows anything about her."

"Take a drink before you go. What will you have?" She touched a bell to summon a waiter, "What is it to be?"

"I'll take a little brandy."

"Bring this gentleman a good drink of brandy."

"I suppose you smoke?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And a couple of good cigars."

The man left with the impression that Madam Blomgarten was a very estimable lady.

On his reporting at the house on Twenty-second street and inquiring for a girl by the name of Verona, he was ushered into the parlor. It being early in the afternoon, Miss Verona was not made up. She was scantily attired, but a commodious kimono covered her ample form. Her blonde locks were unkempt from the night before, and looked somewhat like a capacious mop of tow. She looked

at her visitor on entering the parlor, and made a little apology for not being over-presentable. She surmised that his object in coming was not that of the ordinary caller.

"Well, my man, what's your trouble?" was her greeting.

"You know a girl by the name of Clementina Montague, who is in the hospital?"

"Yes, is she dead?" eagerly.

"No, not when I left, but very near it."

"Poor Clem! I knew her well. We boarded at the same house for three years, Madam Blomgarten's, the old cow."

The investigator received a shock, when he heard such disparaging remarks about the lady he had seen so recently, and of whom he had formed so favorable an opinion.

"Yes," said the blonde, continuing, "that old b—— treated poor Clem outrageously. You see she was an easy mark, and, when she began to run down, madam made her accept anything that came along."

"I have been over to see her, and it was she that sent me to you. What I want to find out is, do you know any of the girl's friends that we could communicate with, as we don't think she'll last long?"

"Poor Clem! I am very sorry to hear that. I used to go to see her, but they refused me admittance. I haven't seen her for a month."

"I think you could see her now, if you wanted. They would not be likely to object."

"Then I'll go this very day."

"Did she ever tell any one, to your knowledge, where she came from?"

"No. She was brought to the resort by a cadet. She was a beautiful girl then, and soon had lots of friends. The

madam, the old she-wolf, made a harvest out of her; but she took unkindly to the life, and was somewhat despondent. We never could get anything out of her as to where she came from, and I am sure she never told any of her male admirers. The past few months, before she sickened, she was run down considerably, and began to lose patronage. Then the madam was ugly to her because she wasn't bringing much grist to her mill—but I always stuck up for her."

"Well, as I can't find anything as to her relatives, I may as well go back and report. So I'll bid you good day."

That afternoon, the blonde made application at the hospital. She was instructed to go to the office and see the house physician. That gentleman treated her very courteously, when she met him.

"So you have come to see Miss Montague?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you can see her, but she will be hardly able to recognize you. I have very little prospect of pulling her through—but you know the old proverb, 'while there's life there's hope'."

Verona, on reaching the bedside of her old associate, was surprised at the wonderful change. The girl lay in a semi-conscious condition.

"I am afraid she is about to cash in her chips," looking at the nurse, who assumed to take no notice of the vulgar remark, as she considered it, in the presence of the dying.

"How long has she been in this condition?" inquired the blonde.

"On the day of your last visit, she seemed to collapse. Brain fever set in, and, on account of her weakened condition, she has never seemed to rally."

"Can nothing be done for her?"

"No more than has been done; in fact, the house physician has given her special attention. He thinks she has been a girl of some acquirements and training."

"So she was, and no doubt has friends somewhere, who would be willing to help her. Do you think I could get her a little extra attendance for a consideration?"

"No, you can't do much for her."

"What I mean, could I get some of the patients who are able to get around to moisten her lips, or fan her—if you think that would do any good?"

"Probably it might be well to have some one close to her to notify us of any change in her condition, for better or for worse. There's a poor girl there who, like herself, is friendless, and a little change, I'm sure, would be very acceptable."

"Call her over, please."

"Here, Maggie," addressing a girl about Clem's age, "this lady wants to speak to you." On the girl coming forward, Verona addressed her:

"Miss, I am interested in this sick woman, and would like you to pay a little attention to her. See if she wants for anything, and here's a couple of dollars for you."

"Thank you, ma'am. I'm sure I'll do all I can for her. She's like myself, an unfortunate."

"I'll be back again in a few days, and give you some more; and, nurse, if she should die, please notify me at once. Here's my card," which read "Verona Larsen, No. — 22nd St."

The nurse was impressed with the generous sentiment of the blonde, and, giving a casual glance at the directions on the card, surmised her calling.

Verona, hearing no news from the hospital for four days, decided on paying another visit. On arriving at the

wicket where inquirers have to tell whom they want to see, and on stating her mission, she was again referred to the house physician, who, on recognizing her, said:

"Well, your friend is still living, but if I permit you to see her it will be only for a few moments, and then you must not talk much to her. She's had a change for the better, so here," giving her a card, "go up and be careful."

"When she reached the bedside, she was pleased to notice Maggie gently fanning the sick woman.

Clem recognized her, and essayed to speak. The big blonde placed her finger to her lips, and sat down on the chair vacated by the temporary nurse. She then took the sick woman's palsied hand in hers and smiled.

Clem Montague stared at her, and again essayed to speak. The blonde placed her fingers to her lips.

Clem smiled at her, knowing that she meant silence.

The nurse, coming forward, greeted Verona. "You see a marked change for the better in your friend," in a low tone, "what she wants now is quiet. Maggie here has been very attentive to her."

Clem looked at the girl, an outcast like herself, and smiled her indorsement of the nurse's recommendations.

Verona stood up, and, taking Maggie aside, gave her instructions and a two-dollar bill. I am thankful to you for what you have done for my sick friend. Now as she is on the way to recovery, probably she will require a little more attention. So, when I come next week, I'll treat you better."

"I am sure it is very kind of you, ma'am, and I'll do all I can for her, but they talk about sending me out of here in a few days, and I'm sure I'm not fit to go."

"I'll try and have you kept here a little longer. What's your name?"

On the girl giving it, Verona made a note of it.

"I must go now." Going over to the bed, she took Clem's hand in hers. "Mum's the order of the day," she whispered to her. "I'm not allowed to talk to you. Will see you in a few days, so good-bye."

Verona lost no time in seeing her county commissioner, and secured a stay for Maggie, whose gratitude was shown in the attention she gave to her patient, as she called Clem, who rapidly improved. Verona visited her often, and, when she was able to indulge in little dainties, Verona saw that neither she nor Maggie went short. In time Clementina was able to go around, and hold communion with others like herself, and was on a fair way to recovery. At the end of four weary months she was notified that she was now ready to be discharged. Her heart sank at the information. She had to go — BUT WHERE?

CHAPTER XX.

"NECESSITY KNOWS NO LAW."

The morning Clementina left the hospital she stood like one dazed, still weak, her mind distracted at the thought of where she should go. Home to B—— was out of the question; and to return to Madam Blomgarten, even if she would take her in, was unthinkable. On entering the hospital she had a few dollars. But she had indulged in a few luxuries that her improving condition made her crave for, and had been generous to some less fortunate financially than herself. Maggie in particular shared in her bounty.

After some thought, on reaching the street, she decided to visit Verona at the house on 22nd street without a moment's delay.

It was an agreeable surprise to Verona, who embraced her, then stood her off, so as to get a better look at her.

"My, Clem, how you have failed! You were never very plump, now you are so thin you could hardly cast a shadow."

"You know what I've gone through, Verona."

Yes, girl, but you must have rest and plenty of fresh air. You haven't been to see the madam yet, have you?"

"No, this is my first call, but I will have to see her, as I have a trunk and some things there that I am anxious to get and dispose of. I will need some money."

"Well, I daren't go with you. When I left I had a row with her, and, if it hadn't been that Mugsy was present, I would have given her something to remember."

“I suppose then I will have to face her myself.”

“Where do you expect to sell your things? You know the girls in the resorts are not allowed to buy anything except through the regular channels, and most of the clothes you have are only suitable for women of our calling. So I’m afraid you won’t get much for them.”

“Little or much, they will have to go, as I will have no further use for them.”

“Why, what are you going to do?”

“Seek a situation. I don’t care what, so that I will be able to keep myself.”

“Why, you silly girl! You’re not fit to do anything. Who would look at you and employ you?”

“I intend, if I get sufficient out of the goods I have, to take a couple of weeks’ rest before I look for anything. I may gain strength and look better, but advise me where am I likely to sell my things. If I try to pawn them, they would hardly give me anything on them, and, if they did, I would probably never release them.”

“The only place I know where they buy such things is on State street—there’s where the girls dispose of their surplus, or when they want to get a little ready cash.”

“Then we will have to try them.”

“You go ahead, then, and get your trunk, or will you wait until after dinner?”

“I intend to go at once, as I need the money.”

“Then I’ll tell you what you’ll do. You get a cab, and drive over—you’re hardly fit to walk—and I will be waiting for you at the corner of Harrison and State. Don’t keep me waiting longer than necessary.”

On arriving at Blomgarten’s, the madam received her very coldly.

"I suppose you have come for your things?" she remarked.

"Yes, ma'am, I came to remove them."

"They're up in the storage room. Dinah will show you where they are." She called Dinah, who, on her arrival, was told to show Miss Montague where her trunk was.

Dinah was as cold as her mistress. She pointed the trunk out. Clem turned the goods over, and, missing some of the best, said, "Dinah, they are not all here."

"Well, Miss, I don't know anything about what you had, and if there's anything missing you'll have to see the missus about it."

"You know, Dinah, I had more than is here."

"I'se supposed to know nothing, Miss."

"Well, I'll see the madam."

On reaching the parlor where madam sat, and on making her complaint, the lady of the house immediately showed some temper.

"You don't want to infer I took them, do you?"

"I don't want to charge you or any one else with stealing, but all my things are not there. You know I had—" mentioning a few things which were not in her trunk.

"Well, I don't know anything about them, and I have no time to waste on you. You have already caused me too much trouble. So take what there is and go."

Clem Montague, seeing the futility of arguing with the brothel keeper, summoned the cabman, who carried the trunk down stairs and placed it on the front of his cab.

"Drive to the corner of Harrison and State streets," was her order, as she entered the cab. Verona was there ahead of her.

"I see you've got them," was her remark, as she entered the cab.

"No, only some of them; most of my best things were taken."

"The old thief," was the blonde's remark, as she took her seat. "What we'll do now," continued the blonde, "we'll drive to where I stay, and call the woman who buys such things up on the phone, and, while we are waiting for her, we can get a little lunch."

A typical Jewish woman, who made it a special business to buy the cast-off clothing of the women in the high class resorts, and sell them to those who were roomers, or denizens in the slum localities, appeared promptly at La Roque's shortly after noon. She examined the goods with a critical eye, and then offered fifteen dollars for them. Clementina was very much disappointed, shocked that the articles which had cost her probably two hundred dollars brought but fifteen!

Verona Larson ridiculed the offer.

"You see," said the woman, "there is little market for clothing of this description. None but sporting women and the cheap vaudeville actresses can use them. I may have some of them on my shelves for years."

"Do you know what they cost?" said Verona.

"That's no criterion," promptly responded the dealer. "You girls are bled to death having to pay twice or three times the value of every thing you purchase."

"You'll give more than fifteen for them, or else we won't sell them," said Verona.

The woman turned them over again, and raised the price to seventeen dollars.

"No, twenty dollars or no sale." Clementina Montague left the bargaining to her friend.

The Jewish woman complained, criticised, and ran down the goods as being old-fashioned, soiled, and frayed. But

Verona was firm, and, as a final result, after many protests as to being imposed on, the dealer produced the twenty dollars, and the sale was effected.

That afternoon Clementina Montague secured for herself a room in a flat building on South Halsted street, paying two dollars a week in advance. The woman who acted as agent asked no questions as to the occupation or standing of her tenant.

The room was scantily furnished. A cheap iron bed, a table, washstand with jug and basin, and a few chairs. A clothes closet was part of the room. There were no cooking utensils or crockery, except a glass and jug for water. The occupants of those rooms were expected to eat out.

Clementina, on receiving possession of her room, threw herself on the bed, for it was at least a haven of rest. She slept, and after a couple of hours rose refreshed, washed and combed her hair, and then went out to eat. Before she went to bed that night she counted her resources and found she had still left nineteen dollars and twenty-three cents, which she thought ample until she could get a situation, and commence a new life. Still feeble, she determined to rest for a couple of weeks, which she spent in visiting the parks, with an occasional call on her friend Verona, who returned her visits, until one afternoon Verona Larson informed her she was going back to St. Louis, where she belonged. Clementina was very much depressed with the news, as Verona, crude as she was, was the only loyal friend she had left.

"I am sorry you're going away, but I suppose your people are living there."

"Yes. I have an old mother. I have sent her money regularly. She thinks I am forelady in a big house."

"I, too, have a mother living," sighed Clem. "I wish I could go back to my old home and see her, but that's impossible. They all think I am dead, and I often wish I were, but you'll write to me, Verona, won't you?"

"Yes, sure, so good-bye! I must be going."

When she had left, Martha Hill figured she hadn't a friend in the world she could turn to. Two weeks of idleness sadly depleted her exchequer, so she started out one Monday morning to seek a position. Her first call was on a labor agency, that taxed her two dollars, and inquired what kind of a position she wanted.

"I am not particular. My choice, however, would be with a respectable family as chambermaid, assistant cook, or nurse."

"I suppose you have good reference from your last place?"

This was an unexpected obstacle that Martha had never thought of.

"You know, Miss, no good family would take you in without reference."

"Then, I have none. Do you think you could get me a position in a store?"

"What experience have you?"

"I am a country girl. I have a fairly good education, and could act as clerk."

"Well, I don't know of anything at present. You can come around in a few days. In the meantime, if anything turns up I will write you."

She resolved not to wait, but seek a place through the newspapers, which had columns of "want ads" for girls in nearly every station in life. So she started out each morning to call on as many as her strength would allow, to be met with the answer "too late," or "what experience have

you had?" or "what we want is young girls." She returned home many nights disheartened and weary. Her courage began to fail her.

The labor agency, which had got her two dollars, informed her they were doing the best they could, but the labor market was glutted at present, and that having no references her opportunities were very limited.

Ere a month was over, after disposing of her only valuables, her resources were nearly exhausted. She began to limit her supply of food. Tea, bread and milk were all she could afford. On the fifth week she gave the landlady her last two dollars, and had hardly money to furnish her with the bare necessities of life. Still there was a flicker of hope, so she determined to hold out. On the sixth week, when her rent became due, she could not meet it. The landlady told her the owner of this property never lets his tenants go back in the rent, "so, if you are unable to pay, Miss, you will have to get out."

During her stay in the flat building, on the same floor were many rooms. Mostly occupied by young women, she had often of an evening, when she sat alone, heard them going to their rooms accompanied by men. She surmised what their purpose was, and in sheer desperation, one evening, when she had only a crust of bread and a little milk the whole day, and the threat of ejectment by the landlady hung over her head, she set out.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ROUND-UP.

Clementina Montague went in the direction of Madison street, and, turning west, noticed many women accosting men, bent on the same errand as she was herself. She let many men pass her, not having the courage to address them, many of whom gazed significantly at her as she turned her head away from them.

At length one, on reaching her, said, "Good evening, Miss." She stood and responded to his salutation.

"Where are you going?" he inquired.

"Nowhere in particular."

"Just out for a stroll?"

"Yes, sir."

"Looking for a sweetheart, I suppose?"

"I wouldn't mind."

"Where do you live?"

"I have a room of my own on Halsted street, No. —."

"Will you take me to it?"

"Yes, if you want to go."

"What will you charge?"

"Just what you would like to give me. I am very poor, and cannot be too exacting."

"Give me a good time?"

"I will try to please you."

"Well, you come with me. I am a police officer."

She begged pitifully for him to let her go.

"This is the first night I have been out, and have been driven to it by want and hunger," she cried.

"That's the old gag. You can tell your story to the justice in the morning."

Just then, a number of girls ran by. The officer who had Clem in charge tried to grab one of them as they passed, but having to hold on to Miss Montague, who, he was bound, should not escape, the fleeing girls avoided him. Ere the officer had started along with his prisoner, two other officers came along, each having two girls in his charge.

"Bring her along, Mike," said one of them addressing the officer who had hold of Clem, who still was pleading with him. He said gruffly, "Come along. I've no time to fritter away with you." He held her by the arm.

Seeing her appeal would avail her nothing, Clem walked by the side of the man. On the road they were joined by others, till it seemed like a procession; the people on the sidewalk laughing, and guying the girls as they were led past them.

Reaching the station, the place was crowded with women of all ages, colors and conditions. Some of them were the worse for liquor and persisted in giving lip to the officers, who only laughed at them. When one was extra violent or offensive, she was grabbed by one of the officers, led to the stairs leading to the cells, and rudely shoved down. Some there were who were so much the worse for drink that they fell in a heap to the bottom of the stairs, and had to be dragged to the cell in which they were thrown. Many were bailed out promptly. A justice or, more properly, an injustice was on hand to go through the matter of form, and earn his dollar.

The lieutenant, who just arrived, after looking over the



"BRING HER ALONG MIKE"

motley group, smiled, as he said to the desk sergeant, "A pretty good haul tonight, Serg."

"Yes, sir," touching his hat. "We've booked ninety-seven already, and they're still coming."

There was a ruddy-faced man at the clerk's desk, signing bonds as fast as the clerk could arrange his papers.

Many of the girls, who were waiting for their release, passed ribald remarks about the "pinch," laughing as if it was a joke.

Several who were friendless were ultimately led down stairs, among them Clementina Montague, and placed in cells, as many as five and six in some of them, to await trial in the morning.

It was a night of horrors. Dante could have found another scene to illustrate his conception of the abode of the eternally damned.

Some there were who screeched out foul epithets against the minions of the law; some sang ribald or lewd songs; others raved in their delirium. There were occasional fights where, after considerable hair pulling, the combatants had to be placed in separate cells ere peace could be restored. Even then, the close proximity of the compartments gave inmates an opportunity to tongue-thrash each other in unprintable language. In the cell Clementina Montague was placed there were five other occupants, one, a coarse, vulgar colored woman, who persisted in talking to herself in spite of the protests of others, who called her "the black b——" and threatened her with violence. There was little accommodation in the cells, the occupants having either to stand up, or squat on the floor.

One of the occupants of the cell Miss Montague was in, though a veteran, sat silently on the floor. At length, notice

ing Miss Montague, who sat beside her, she said, "So they got you in the 'round up'?" looking at her.

"I don't know what you mean?"

"Oh, is that so? Is this the first time you were here?"

"Yes."

"Then you've been fortunate. I've been here a dozen times. I'll be bailed out in the morning, and then told to go hustle, the professional bailer and the judge having got their bits. You see them and the police and politicians all stand in, and, whenever they want to bleed us girls, the word is given to 'round us up.' We'll all be turned out tomorrow."

"I have no friends," replied Clementina, "there will be no one to bail me out."

"Don't be too sure of that," remarked the girl, "the bond shark may take a chance with you. He runs no risk anyhow, as they all stand in—even the tool on the bench; he gets a dollar a head for us as his share, a part of our earnings. When we get out tomorrow, they'll probably let us alone for a couple of weeks, then the police will be very sociable with us, especially if you give them part of the proceeds."

It was near morning before a lull came over the place. The drunks, exhausted by their hilarity, lay on the floor of their cells, and all was quiet, except an occasional scream or oath from some of the cells.

Shortly before the judge arrived, all the women who still remained were taken to a large room adjoining the court, to await their turn to be called. Others, who had been bailed out the night before, sat on forms in the body of the court room, some were in groups—those were from the houses which had been pulled. A well-dressed woman, the madam of the establishment they were from, sat in their

midst. Occasionally a lawyer would hold conference with her, or a policeman would nod and smile at her—she showing no resentment, as she knew it was the order of the day.

In the pen, as it was called, the ruddy-faced gentleman made occasional trips to confer with some of the inmates, with whom he seemed acquainted. On one occasion, noticing Miss Montague, who seemed alone, he approached her and inquired her name.

“Clementina Montague.”

“I don’t remember ever seeing you here before.”

“No; this is the first time I have been here.”

“Then you’re new in this district?”

“Yes.”

“Have you no friend to bail you out?”

“No.”

“That’s too bad. I would bail you out if you would agree to pay me back.” At this moment the name of “Clementina Montague” was called by the clerk of the court. The officer who arrested her came in to convey her to the court room.

“Wait a while, Mike,” said the bondsman to him. “Pass her case.” The officer returned to the court room.

“What do you say?” said the ruddy-faced man.

“I don’t see any way to pay you back. Besides, I don’t care what they do with me.”

“Well, if that’s the way you feel, all right,” and he returned to the court room.

Clementina’s case was called, the policeman coming for her and lining her up in front of the bar.

The judge looked at her over his spectacles, and then at the officer.

“Your honor, this woman was found soliciting on Madi-

son street yesterday evening. I watched her accosting a number of men, and then felt it my duty to arrest her."

"What have you to say for yourself?" said the judge, looking at some papers on his desk, and seeming to take little notice of the prisoner.

"What the officer says is not true."

The judge raised his head, and frowned at her. The policeman only smiled.

"Well, what were you doing on Madison street?" inquired the judge.

Clementina held down her head.

His honor waited a moment for a reply, none coming.

"We are going to stop this street walking," he said, severely, "which is becoming so prevalent in that business thoroughfare." He looked over at the bondsman, as if waiting for a cue, but the bondsman assumed to take no notice. Turning to the prisoner, he said, "Twenty-five dollars and costs."

She stood as if in a stupor, when the policeman took her by the arm and led her back to the pen.

The professional bondsman followed them into the room.

"I see the judge soaked you," he said.

She made no reply.

"Three months in the bridewell," the policeman remarked, laughing, "will teach her not to contradict an officer again, and I want to serve notice on you," looking at her, "every time I catch you on the streets I'll run you in." He then left.

She was indifferent to his remarks.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the bondsman. "I'll pay your fine and costs, and, as there's no use of you going on the streets, you'd better go into some good house for the

time being. I won't press you too hard for what you'll owe me."

The policemen came to remove those who still remained in the large room.

"Dwell a moment," said the bondsman, when one of the officers went toward Clementina.

"All right, —," said the policeman.

"What do you say?" addressing the prisoner.

"As you will," was her reply.

He immediately left the room, and went over to where the judge was still sitting, and whispered something to him. The judge called the clerk to him and said, "That fine of Clementina Montague is suspended."

"Yes, sir."

The bondsman went with the clerk, and gave him some money. Court expenses, particularly the judge's rake-off, had to be paid. He then returned to the room where Clementina Montague was still sitting. He brought a young man with him.

"Well, I've fixed things for you. Now take care of yourself." Turning to the young man, he said, "Take her over to Kanter's and tell Kate I will be over to see her."

"Good-bye, Miss," he said, as he extended his hand to his dupe.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SURPRISE

The little town of B—— had grown rapidly since the time of Martha Hill's disappearance. No man had profited more by its increasing importance than had Matt Howard, who ran the general store. Always an attentive business man, after the final search for Martha had been given up, he seemed to settle down with but one object in view, to make money. With the young women who came into the store he was always sociable, but he seemed to treat all alike. He had no preference for any of them. Bob Hill and he were constant pals and neither had much time to waste on the girls, though Robert was known to think highly of one of Howard's sisters, with whom he used to gossip when he went over to the store to meet Matt. The mention of Martha's name had been dropped entirely. It awoke unpleasant memories, all knew it. So none dared to revive it. Bob had also shared in the general prosperity. He was now chief engineer at the large mill, and drew a liberal salary. So the Hill family was living on Easy street. Of course the old couple could never entirely hide their grief. If their girl only lay in the graveyard they would have been satisfied—they knew she was dead, but where, buried in an unknown grave, or perhaps lying at the bottom of Lake Michigan, murdered, or killed, or drowned by accident, 'twas all the same. They were denied the poor comfort of weeping over her remains or tending to her last resting place. The old couple might talk over the sad mystery by

themselves, but never in the presence of Bob or the other children. It made them unhappy, without doing good — when she left they were fortunate in having a photograph of her. Bob had sent for and got an enlarged picture of her in a fine gilt frame. It was placed in the most prominent place on the parlor wall. Matt Howard never came to the Hill home but he glanced up at the picture to see if it was still there.

Matt Howard, like the other business men at B——, always gave his orders to drummers. The salesmen had many samples put up at the hotel after notifying them of their coming. Howard being the best risk in the town, besides the largest buyer, his trade was courted. If there was a bargain he got a friendly tip from the salesman in advance. If it had to be a cash transaction it made no difference to Matthew. The money was in the bank, as his account was seldom overdrawn. One time, a strong inducement was offered to Matt to make a very large purchase. He knew the price was right, but his deposit in the bank was considerably shy to cover the deal. He thought before he would close the deal he would see the bank president.

“I have a splendid offer of a large line of goods I can buy; it has to be cash. I thought I would come over and find my limit.”

“You can’t find it,” said the president, smiling at him.

“But it’s so much!” replied Matt, mentioning quite a large sum.

“Is that all?” said the president, looking at him. “If it is, go and cinch the lot; give him your check, I’ll take care of it. You can ask him if he has any more at the same price, if you think it is right.”

Matt thanked the president of the bank, went and secured a bargain, which his customers shared in, because

Howard was a fair dealer; when he bought cheap he sold cheap. Deals like this put him in good standing with all the salesmen for the big houses. Drummers met in the hotels of an evening and gossiped, as well as tried to amuse themselves. One of them had a line he had orders to sell, the firm wanted to unload.

"Go and see Howard," was a frequent suggestion. If it was a new man, he might say, "But you see they want cash for them."

"Then you go to see Matt Howard, he's your man."

Matt sometimes warned the travelers that he would go up to Chicago, as he felt sure they were sticking him.

"You come, Matt," said the representative of the great firm of Dent & Company. "We'll pay all your expenses, and entertain you while you're there."

It was only a bluff of Matt. He hadn't time.

"Come now," said the drummer. "I dare you to come!"

"Well, I may some day. But when I do I'll pay my own expenses, and not put you fellows to the trouble of adding it to the prices of what I buy of you."

The drummer laughed. "You're all right, Matt, but come anyway."

In the fall of the year, Matt decided that he would take a run up to Chicago and buy some winter stock. He made known his intention to Bob Hill, and pressed him hard to go with him.

"Come, Bob," he said. "It won't cost you a cent."

"I would very much like to, but I can't get away. There's no one I could leave in my place, and we're working double shift. Besides, you know I have often been in Chicago." This remark brought a gloom over them both.

They knew what Bob's mission was during his many trips, so the subject was dropped.

When Matt Howard handed his card to a man who sat at a desk, just as you entered the office of the great wholesale establishment of Dent & Company, the man took the card to an inner office, came out in a few moments, and said:

"This way, Mr. Howard."

Howard was ushered into a private office. As he went in he noticed on the glass door the word "president." A gentleman well up in years rose to greet him when he entered.

"Mr. Howard, I am very much pleased to meet you. Sit down; my name is Dent."

"Oh yes, Mr. Dent, I have often heard Mr. Small, the man who represents you in the district our town is situated in, speak of you."

"Indeed, I hope that he don't talk bad of me?" laughing.

"No, he speaks well of you. He says you're a good business man, and an all around good fellow."

"I think I'll have to raise Small's salary," smiling. "Well, I'm sorry Small's not in the city at present, or I would hand you over to his care. How long do you intend to stay with us?"

"Four or five days."

"Well, then we will not have much time to lose," ringing a bell. A man put his head in at the door. "Is Mr. Stubbs in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell him I want him."

In a few minutes a well dressed man about thirty-five years of age entered the private office.

"Stubbs, shake hands with Mr. Matthew Howard of B——."

Howard and Stubbs shook hands.

"Bye the bye," remarked Dent, "I forgot to ask you if you smoke," reaching over and picking up a box of cigars. Howard took one.

"Stubbs, take a cigar. Now, Mr. Howard is only going to stay a few days with us, and, lest he gets lost in this great big city, I want you to show him around. Do you ever go to the theatre, Mr. Howard?"

"Well, we haven't much of a theatre in our town," said Howard, smiling.

"You'll most likely want to go one night. Stubbs find out what's the best show in town and get tickets for it, and see to it that when Mr. Howard goes back home he will have a good impression of Dent & Company. Have you secured a hotel yet, Mr. Howard?"

"Yes, sir. I left my case at the Palmer House."

"Well, I have put you in good hands, Mr. Howard, and of course I'll see you before you go."

Howard remarked to Stubbs, when he got out, that Dent was a pretty fine fellow.

"An all around sport," whispered Stubbs.

Stubbs held on to Howard like a sticking plaster. Matthew had little opportunity to visit any establishment that was in competition with the firm of Dent & Company,

Wherever they went, Stubbs paid the bills.

Matt Howard remonstrated about the third time there was a settlement.

"Do you want me to get fired?" said Stubbs, laughing at him. "Why, you're Mr. Dent's guest while you're in Chicago, and I'm his proxy."

Matt laughed, as he put his money back in his pocket.

Stubbs seemed to be very well acquainted wherever he went, introducing Howard to a great number of people. The first night they spent at Hooley's, after the show having supper in a swell restaurant.

"This is a pretty gay place," remarked Howard, as he looked at the showily dressed women with their escorts.

"That's nothing to what we have south of here," remarked Stubbs. "I suppose you've heard of the White Elephant?"

"Yes," said Matt, laughing. "I've some idea what you mean."

"Well, if you'd like to see him I'll show you both sides of it."

"Is it safe?" inquired Howard.

"As the Bank of England, if I'm with you."

"Well, I wouldn't mind. There's no one knows me here."

"Then all right; we'll start out tomorrow evening. But, mind you, we mayn't get home till morning."

"If I get home all right, I don't care."

"No danger. There is no use starting out until after ten o'clock. I'll call for you at the hotel. You needn't bring much money with you, not that you need fear losing it."

Stubbs was at the hotel at the appointed time.

"Now, Howard, I'll first show you the gilded side. It's only a little distance from here, so we'll walk." Arriving in front of a large building, "This place is kept by a woman by the name of Blomgarten. It's one of the swell ranches."

Howard felt some embarrassment as he went up the marble steps, and entered the house. The negro bowed to Stubbs as he entered.

"The madam in the parlor?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir."

Stubbs stopped, and looked into the parlor. Howard peered over his shoulder.

A stout woman came to the door. "How are you, Mr. Stubbs; aren't you coming in?"

"Yes, this is a young friend of mine from the country. I'm just showing him the sights."

"Well, bring him in, he's welcome. Do you want me to introduce him to one of my girls?"

"Well, that's up to him, but send us a bottle up to the corner there," pointing to the back parlor, "and send us a couple of your fairies to help us drink it."

"Oh, Mr. Stubbs, you never treat my girls with proper respect. How's the boss? He don't come here now as often as he did before the accident, the dear man."

Stubbs walked toward the rear parlor, followed by Howard. Many of the women nodded to Stubbs, who smiled at them.

Matthew Howard had never seen such well-dressed women in his life. A bottle of champagne was brought and four glasses. In a brief time, madam was seen bringing over two young women. "You haven't introduced me to your friend yet, Mr. Stubbs?"

"Oh, I forgot. Mr. Jones, of Nebraska, Madam Blomgarten."

Matt's face lit up, and Madam Blomgarten bowed and welcomed him to her "little place," as she called it. "Miss Lemoine La Blanche, Mr. Jones; Miss Seraphina Trudell, Mr. Jones. Now I hope you four will enjoy yourselves." The waiter filled the glasses and stood as if waiting for the money. "Charge," said Stubbs. The waiter turned and left.

Miss La Blanche began a conversation with Howard

as to how long he would stay in the city. The front parlors were fairly full of people. The piano was playing, and some were waltzing.

"Do you dance, Mr. Jones?" inquired the young lady.

"No, I unfortunately have not that accomplishment."

Stubbs and Miss Trudell were talking in an undertone and the name of Dent and Montague cropped out occasionally. "I was awfully sorry for poor Clementina," remarked Miss Trudell. "She was a nice girl when she came here first."

"Well, Jones, we'll have to be moving," said Stubbs, rising. "We'll probably see you girls later."

Howard began to think Miss La Blanche was a very sweet girl. He was somewhat loath to leave her, but followed Stubbs, after he had shaken hands with the mistress. "I hope you will call again, Mr. Jones," said the young woman, smiling up in his face.

"Come on," said Stubbs.

"What was your hurry?" inquired Howard, when they got on the outside.

"I'm going to show you through," replied Stubbs. "If you want to come back, I've no doubt you will find your own way." Howard laughed, as he remarked, "Well, I thought she was a pretty swell girl."

Stubbs showed him through two other places, in all of which the guide seemed to be well acquainted. It was almost twelve o'clock, when Stubbs said:

"Now I'll show you another feature of the same kind of life. But, as we're going to the West Side, we'll have to get a cab over at the depot here."

Securing a cab, he told the driver to take them to Lake and Peoria streets. As Howard got out of the cab, he looked around with some alarm at the number of tough-looking men and women, some negroes mingling with white

people standing around the saloon doors. Both men and women talking in loud tones, the music of pianos and stringed instruments could be heard in each of the houses. "This seems a pretty tough place," remarked Howard, who began to feel a little nervous.

"You bet," said Stubbs. "A man don't want to be too gay around here." They walked along Peoria street till they came to a two-story frame building, the two front windows of which were covered with white blinds. There was a face up against the glass of each, a glaring light over the transom showing the number in large figures.

"A woman by the name of Kate Kanter keeps this place," whispered Stubbs, as they were climbing the wooden steps leading to where the lights were. The noise of many people talking at once could be heard amid discordant laughter and the thumping of a piano.

As Howard followed Stubbs into the house, a woman accosted Howard in a familiar manner.

"Hello, young sport. " Howard followed Stubbs in without seeming to notice her remark. As they entered the parlor, Howard noticed that a number of the women were smoking cigarettes, others were sitting on fellows' knees. The place looked coarse and brutal in comparison with what he had seen on the south side. Stubbs walked right over to where there was an unoccupied table and sat down. Howard sat with his back to the company. Two women came immediately forward and, sitting down beside them, said, "Good evening!"

"How do, girls?" said Stubbs, in a cheery manner. "Take a drink with us?"

"Sure!"

"Well, bring us a couple of quart bottles," said Stubbs to a waiter, who was standing attention.

"That's the way to talk," said one of the girls, who was nearly loaded at the time. "Are you going to stay all night?" she whispered to Howard, who began to feel uncomfortable.

"Well, we're going to look around a bit first," said Stubbs, hearing her remark to Howard.

"Oh, just as you please," she rejoined.

"Well, don't get mad," said Stubbs. "Take a drink of the beer."

"I don't care for beer."

"Well, take something else, nothing too good for you."

"Give me a little red eye," said the girl, addressing the waiter. "Here, Josie, take some of this beer," she continued, handing one of the bottles over to a party that sat at an adjoining table.

Howard began to feel angry at the liberty she was taking.

Stubbs only laughed, as if it was a good joke.

"Here's Kate herself," remarked Stubbs, as a tall, raw-boned woman entered the room. She came over to where Stubbs was sitting, and, tapping him on the shoulder, said, "How do, old sport! I haven't seen you for some time. How's tricks?"

"Pretty good. Will you join us?"

"I don't mind if I do. Get up!" she said to the girl who had given away the bottle of beer. "You're piped!"

Howard felt some relief, as the girl went away.

"What are you going to have, Kate, a little wine?"

"I don't mind if I do. Bring me a little port."

"Bring a bottle," said Stubbs. When the port was brought, the waiter brought four glasses with it.

"Pass that beer over to that other table," said Stubbs to the waiter, as half of the bottle beer still remained.

"I won't drink anything but beer," remarked Howard. Kate filled his glass and handed the bottle over to where some other girls sat. Four glasses of port wine had been filled out. Stubbs took one, the woman who sat down when they first came in took another. Kate, seeing a spare glass, turned around and said, "Here, Clementina, take a glass of wine."

Howard turned his head to see who the newcomer was. At sight of her he bounced from his chair. He stared at the girl as if she were a ghost. The girl dropped her glass from her hand; it was smashed to pieces on the floor. Howard continued to stare at the woman, who staggered back, and, falling in a seat, bowed her head between her knees.

"What's up?" said Stubbs, in alarm.

"I-thought-I-knew-her!" gasped Howard.

"Maybe you did," said Kate. "Probably she's an old flame, but that's no reason you should break the glasses, or upset the wine." Howard in his excitement had upset the bottle on the table. "She's there at your service, if you want her."

"Yes, I want her."

"Sit down!" shouted Stubbs.

"No, I'll see you later."

"Well, do you want me to wait for you?"

"I don't know."

"Come, Clementina, business," said Kate.

Matthew Howard went over to where the woman still sat with her head bowed down. He caught her by the arm. She rose and they left the room together.

"Look here, Kate," said Stubbs, "that young fellow's a friend of mine. See to it that no harm befalls him. When

he is ready to leave, order a cab, and send one of your men with him, if need be. You know me, I'll foot the bill."

"All right, Stubbs, old man. I'll take care of him. Perhaps you had better wait. He'll likely be down soon."

"No, I'm going. You do as I tell you."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE STORY.

When Matthew Howard stood facing Martha Hill in a room on the second floor of Kate Kanter's house, neither could speak for a time. Howard gazed with pity on the girl he had known from childhood, as she stood with bowed head.

"Matthew," she said, at length, looking into his agonized face, "you don't want me?"

"No, Martha, there was a time when I did, but under conditions sanctified and honorable to us both."

She sat down and began to cry. He rested his head on his hands. He seemed bewildered. At last he inquired:

"How came you here, Martha? We thought you dead."

"Would I were; I have often hoped I was."

"Tell me what terrible misfortune brought you to this life, to this wretched place?"

"It's a long and painful story, Matthew. While it is long since I have been shocked at the recital of any story, no matter how vicious, I still hate to tell you."

"Yes, but you must have some explanation to make—some reason to explain. When you left B—— we all thought you a pure girl. Surely you didn't come to Chicago bent on following a life of shame?"

"No, Matthew, I had no such thought. My only desire was to seek an honorable calling, a situation by which I could help my parents. But I was wronged, trapped, sold

into slavery, as are thousands of other innocent girls who come to this more than wicked city to seek employment."

"How could it occur to you, you were an intelligent girl—a woman for your years?"

"I will tell you if you'll promise to never let my people know. They believe me dead; 'tis well. My coming to life would only open the wounds afresh—to know the life I lead would be worse than death to them."

"Martha," he said, rising and going toward her, "I can make you no such promise. You must leave this place. It would kill me to think you would remain here an hour longer."

"Ah, no, Matt, I am here to stay, until turned out to find a place still more degraded, where women are more unnatural, more abandoned, and where they resort to drugs to blunt the last semblance of their womanhood."

"Horrible! Can any place be worse than this?"

She nodded her head.

"You remember the day you left us, Martha, when we set you on the train, how the girls, your companions, and I with your brother and other young men, wished you success and a speedy return?"

"Yes, I will not forget it." She smiled. "When Alice Rainer said, 'Why don't you kiss her, Matt?' when you stood back abashed. Matt, you don't know how much I would have liked you to kiss me that day." Her tears began to flow at the thought. He wiped his eyes, and, going toward her, said, "Martha, though degraded as you seem and, as I am afraid, you are, I will kiss you for the old love. If I had known then, as you lead me to believe now, the feelings you had for me I would have taken you in my arms and held you till the train went on its way. But we were both young; I was shy, and you were reserved."

"True, Matt, I was foolish; you were in good circumstances. My people were poor: that's one of the reasons I was desirous to get away to show you and the rest of the people, our friends, that Martha Hill could win her way. But it's too late now to talk of those things."

There was a knock at the door.

"Hush!" she waved her hand to Matthew, as she went to the door. "What is it, Lulu?"

"Kate wants to know if you two are going to occupy this room all night?"

"Wait a moment, Lulu." Martha Hill closed the door. "Matthew, you must be going; the woman below thinks I have wasted too much time with you already."

"I'll not leave here till I hear your story."

"Come now, do! You don't want to stay with me; you would despise yourself after, and I still think too much of you, Matthew." She placed her hands upon his shoulders and looked entreatingly into his face.

"Are you going to keep me here all night?" said the girl at the door, impatiently.

"Come now, Matthew, like a good fellow, let us go. Give me a dollar to give her."

"No, I am going to stay here till you tell me how it occurred."

"I am afraid to let you stay longer, Matthew love, I cannot trust myself."

"You need not fear me, but go I won't. How much does she want for her room?"

"She will expect five dollars."

"Then give it to her," pulling out a roll of bills.

"No, I am afraid. Let us go."

Howard went and opened the door. "Tell your mistress we're going to stay all night."

"Well, she'll want the five. Tell Clem to come to the door till I talk to her."

"Here, give the mistress this," thrusting the five-dollar bill into the girl's hand.

"You're the right kind of a sport," said the girl to him, as she left.

Martha Hill had to succumb to Matthew Howard's resolute manner.

"Now, Martha, you know I'm interested in you and have only one object in view, that is to serve you, so, if you ever cared for me, tell me the truth, how came you to fall so low? Is this the first place ever you were in?"

"No, Matt, the girls who come here as a rule are the cast-offs from the more stylish places. Few girls enter on a life of shame here before they come to places like this. They are beyond redemption. I was first sold to a place down town kept by a woman of influence, against whose word her victims have no show. Her name is Blomgarten."

"I was in there tonight," said Matt with a start.

She looked hard at him for a moment. "How came you to go into such places?"

To in part justify himself he had to explain. At the mention of the name of Dent & Company she became interested.

"I know him well."

"Now, Martha," he said, "before you begin your story would you like something to eat—some refreshments?"

"I am not strong, Matt, and I could do with something."

"Can you send out for anything?"

"Yes, I'll call the man."

An unfortunate-looking fellow appearing, Matt ordered

him to go out and bring a nice supper for two, and a bottle of wine. "And there's a dollar for yourself." When he went down he informed the mistress of the house that Clem had a live one upstairs.

As the two sat and ate, Martha Hill's countenance seemed to undergo a change.

"Matt," she said, "this is the only happy moment I have had, since I left home."

Matthew Howard could see the ravages that the life she led had told on her. He was grieved to the heart. He first told her of the efforts that had been made to find her, of the trips her brother had made to Chicago, and of his futile search. He told how they had given her up as dead, and of her enlarged picture that hung in the parlor, of the present condition of her family, and of Bob's advance in his trade. She wept profusely, as he told the story. At its conclusion, he said, "Now, Martha, let me hear from you."

"Well, if I must, I will," she said. She told him of her standing on the corner, of the very day she left her home, of the affable young man that accosted her, and the consequences, how she had been drugged, then taken to and confined in the attic, all her clothing taken from her; how she had been ill-used and brutalized, until, seeing no hope of escape, she had to succumb. Matthew Howard grew pale and sick at heart, as she told the frightful narrative.

"I am telling you the God's truth, Matt. I am hiding nothing from you."

"Who was this young fellow that accosted you on the street?"

"He called himself George Washington, was well dressed, and appeared to be respectable, but he was a decoy—a cadet they call them—whose mission was to entrap girls

for houses of infamy. I never saw him from the time he delivered me unconscious to Sadie Blomgarten until some months after. It was at a ball. I recognized him the moment I saw him and, as he passed the box we were in, I dashed the wine I held in my hand into his face. I learned his name and calling. He was one of the most expert of white slavers, a Jew, his real name was Ike Rosenthal."

"Does he still live in Chicago?"

"Yes, and is still practicing his nefarious profession."

"But why didn't you appeal to the authorities when you first got out?" he inquired eagerly.

"Authorities!" she repeated. "Why, they would laugh at me, as they have done at other girls. Sadie Blomgarten would produce a dozen witnesses who could swear that I came there of my own free will and brought a fellow with me, the first night I entered her place, and that I was of age, so that she was in no way responsible."

"Well, why didn't you come home?"

"Matthew, how could I face my people with such a story, after I had spent weeks in a brothel. I couldn't do it, so hoped they would forget me. After three years I took ill, contracted a disease, and they took me to a hospital. When I got well, I resolved to lead a good life, determined to seek a situation, I didn't care at what, so long as it was honest. I went to Blomgarten's and took what things I had there, and sold them for less than one-tenth of what I had paid for them, and then secured a room on Halsted street. On coming out of the hospital, in which I had spent four months, I was too weak to work, so I laid up for a couple of weeks, and then went out to seek employment. Day after day I searched in vain. You see I had neither references nor experience. Nor did I appear robust. At length my money was exhausted. The woman from whom I rented the room

was going to turn me out, because I could not pay her the rent. With nothing to eat, driven to disperation, one night I went on the street, willing to beg or sell myself. There was no other recourse. It happened to be the night of the Round-Up."

"What's that?" inquired Matthew, eagerly.

"The night the male prostitutes want to levy on the girls' wages of sin."

Matthew Howard was breathless, as she went on to describe her arrest, the scenes in the cells and court room, the threat of the policeman and the action of the bondsman, who gave her the alternative of the jail or the brothel. "I had lost all hope," said the disconsolate girl. "That's how I came here. Dent was a constant visitor of mine at Blomgarten's. I got him into trouble that led his wife to divorce him. Now I have told you all. You see I have been a victim, a slave sold and bought in the market, just as thousands of other girls are in this city of Sodom."

"Martha,, it's a horrible story. How can such things take place in a Christian country?"

It was long past three in the morning when Martha Hill had concluded her story.

"I will have to go," he said.

"No, Matt, you can't go tonight. Those corners are too dangerous for a stranger to go abroad. You must sleep here in that bed, but not with me."

"I think I could get to my hotel all right."

"Maybe so, but I think too much of you to take the risk. You might be watched and followed as you leave this house. Your very sociability with me, your appearance would lead the prowlers to track your steps. While with me here you are safe. If I had only the luck to have stayed

with you in our own sweet town in Michigan, I too would have been safe. But it hadn't to be, so let it rest, Matt. We cannot bring back the past; you had better retire." She arose, as if to leave the room.

"No! Sit down, Martha, and let us talk. I am not tired. Can we get another bottle of wine?"

"Yes, the saloons are open all night around here. They are the refuge of all the down and outs, the vile and the vicious. It is not for me to moralize, but my downfall commenced in one of them, as did that of thousands of girls before me. The young single woman who enters a saloon to drink with a man crosses the danger line, for often, yes frequently, the path through the saloon is the highway to the brothel. I'll go call the man and you can send him for the wine. I am used to staying up at night and sleeping in the day."

In a brief time an old derelict arrived. Howard gave him the money, instructing him to bring a bottle of the best port, which he soon furnished.

Under the influence of the wine, Martha Hill became voluble, and reminded Matt of their early childhood days and the pranks they used to play.

"Matt," she said, her eyes sparkling, "do you remember how me and Rachel used to hurl tufts of grass and clay at ye both while you'd be plodding in the dear old creek and how you and Bob used to chase us?"

"I do, Martha." They both laughed at the recital.

"And, Matt, do you remember the times I used to stay a night at your house, and how I and Rachel, in our night dresses, would get up and go to your room, and if you were sleeping hurl the pillows at you till you were real mad, and then you'd get up and some times not even take time to put

your pants on, and chase us back to bed?" She laughed at her own recital.

"Sure I do, Martha. And do you remember the flailing I used to give you both with the pillows you had thrown at me until you both had to shout for mercy?"

"Ah, Matt, them were happy days, weren't they?"

"Yes, Martha, we had no trouble then."

And thus they talked for hours, until the gray dawn appeared in the eastern horizon.

"Martha, do you ever sing now?"

"No. I have never sung a note, since I left home. I hardly think I could sing now."

"Suppose you try, if it's not too late."

"It is never late here, Matt, but I'm afraid to try. I know I'd fail."

"Come, darling, sing me one of your old songs. You remember the old Irish song your father and all of us liked so well?"

"I don't remember which one you mean."

"It was one of Moore's; it was—let me see—it commences something like this, Silent, oh Moyle,—"

"Yes, now I know the one you mean. Let me see, perhaps I have forgotten it." She hummed to herself for a few moments, and then rising said, "I will sing for you, Matt," cleared her throat and began:

THE SONG OF FIONNUALA.

Silent, oh Moyle, be the roar of thy water,
Break not, ye breezes, your chain of repose,
While, murmuring mournfully, Lir's lonely daughter
Tells to the night-star her tale of woes.
When shall the swan, her death-note singing,
Sleep, with wings in darkness furl'd?
When will heaven, its sweet bell ringing,
Call my spirit from this stormy world?



THE SWAN SONG

Sadly, oh Moyle, to thy winter-wave weeping,
Fate bids me languish long ages away;
Yet still in her darkness doth Erin lie sleeping
Still doth the pure light its dawning delay.
When will that day-star, mildly springing,
Warm our isle with peace and love?
When will heaven, its sweet bell ringing,
Call my spirit to the fields above?

It would seem as if she was inspired. Her voice rang out loud, clear and melodious; her heart and soul seemed in the song, and her effort to please.

There was a commotion down on the first floor. Foot-steps could be heard stealthily climbing the stairs so as to get nearer without disturbing the singer. At the conclusion of the song there was loud clapping, with some husky voices shouting, "Bravo! Bravo! Give us another."

Martha Hill sat down, and, resting her head upon her hands, wept bitterly. Those who had climbed the stairs, awed and impressed by the spark of kindly feeling still left in their breasts, felt commiseration for the unfortunate girl, whose sobbing was plainly audible, so silently retraced their steps without any further demonstration.

Matthew tried his best to console her, spoke to her in endearing terms, but she was irreconcilable. At length, rising and wiping her eyes, she said, "Matthew, I must bring you clean sheets for that bed; you see it has been laid on."

Matt himself, harrowed by the painful scene, raised no objection to her leaving the room. His heart was too full for utterance.

Martha went out and returning with clean bed clothes made the bed. "Now I will go outside until you strip yourself. You'll want some rest. I am used to sitting up."

When Martha re-entered the room Matt Howard was in bed.

"It's not right for me, Martha, to put you out of your bed. You might lie alongside here—you need have no fear of me."

"No, Matt, I'm afraid of myself."

She left the room. After a time she stole silently into the room where he lay and going over to the bed gazed on him for a few moments and, placing her lips to his, stole silently out.

When he awoke, it was late in the morning.

Martha Hill lay stretched, sound asleep, on the rug in front of the door, with all her clothes on.

He arose and dressed, while she still slept, then went over to where she lay. She was dreaming. He distinctly heard her mutter names of some of those she knew in her early days. It seemed as if her imaginings were pleasant, as she frequently smiled. At length he woke her, she gazed for a moment at him and then at the dismal surroundings. She arose, and the same care-worn look she had the night before settled on her countenance. "I see you are ready to go, Matt?" was her first remark.

"No, Martha, I have still some more to learn, and would renew my appeal to you to leave this place. You need not go back to B—— for a time. I will find you a home for a week, a month, for a year, till you become yourself again, and in the meantime we can devise some plan or some reason for your long absence, after which you may renew the old life and be happy again."

She shook her head.

"Come, come, Martha; if you ever loved me, listen to my appeal. Come with me, I am now well off and can amply provide for you. The door is open to you, you are still young and can become a good woman. You used to be religious, well up in the scriptures, and you know the story

of the Magdalene. Come now, don't refuse me." He took her in his arms.

She shook her head. "Matt, never let anyone know you saw me," she said, entreatingly.

"No, Martha, I will never make such a promise."

"Then, Matthew, it is my turn to reason with you. My friends believe me dead. It would be cruel to undeceive them, the wounds of my loss are already partly healed; why open them anew in a more aggravated form? Come, kiss me and go." She led him toward the door of the room. He followed her down the stairs, reaching the outer door, where they stood.

"Come, Martha," was his last appeal.

She shook her head. "Promise you will forget me."

"No, Martha, I cannot do that. Let me give you some money."

She held up her hands in protest. He had a bill in his palm. He shoved it between her dress and her breast, turned and was gone. She lingered on the steps till she saw him turn the corner of Lake street.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OATH.

Bob Hill arrived about 7:30 p. m. at the store. He went over to where Rachel was standing behind the cashier's desk.

"Matt get back?"

"Yes, Bob, but he's up in his room. It don't seem as if he had enjoyed his trip."

"Probably he bought too much goods," said Bob, laughing, "or some of those sharp business men in Chicago have stuck him."

"Oh, I don't believe that. Matthew generally knows what he wants, and, as for buying too much, you know Matt has no limit when the price is right."

"Well, I think I'll go up and see him. Likely he ran around too much when he was away."

In answer to Robert Hill's knock on Matthew Howard's door there was the invitation to come in. Howard knew in advance who it was—his closest and warmest friend, since as boys they had played marbles together. As soon as Robert entered the room and looked at Matthew, he saw something had gone wrong. He was deathly pale, like a sick man.

"What's up?" said Bob, looking at him. "One would think you had just seen a ghost."

"So I have, Bob. A ghost, the sight of whom I'll never be able to banish from my mind."

"Oh, don't take it that bad. Business gone wrong, or were you robbed while away?"

"No! no! A hundred times worse than that."

"Well, what is it, if it's not a secret?" taking a seat.

"I saw Martha while I was away."

"What!" bouncing from his chair. "My sister that we all thought dead?"

"Yes, Bob, and worse than dead."

"No! no! Don't say that. Surely this is some horrible mistake of yours—some hallucination."

"Would to heaven it were, but it's too true. I saw her and spoke to her; talked with her about you and her people."

"My God! Don't keep me in suspense. Where?"

"Sit down and compose yourself first. Wait till I close the door."

"Tell me; tell me quick."

"Well, I must begin to tell you how first. You know I deal extensively with one firm in Chicago. They consider me a very good customer. When I called at their place I was introduced to the head of the firm — a Mr. Dent. He treated me very sociably, and introduced me to a man by the name of Stubbs, telling him that he had to show me around and entertain me during my stay in the city. The first night we went to the theatre. The following day I did some business. Stubbs made arrangements to call for me at my hotel in the evening, and, while we were smoking, he asked me if I cared to go around and see the sights. I said I didn't care where I went. It was up to him. He said, 'You have heard, no doubt, a good deal of the White Elephant we have here?' At first I didn't know exactly what he meant. He said, 'The red light district, the place where the women are.' I asked him if there was any danger.

‘Not while you’re with me.’ So I was a little curious and consented to go. The first place he took me to was like a palace. A woman by the name of Sadie Blomgarten runs it. When we went into the parlor, I saw about twenty of the best dressed women I ever saw in my life—some of them were mere girls. Stubbs seemed to be well known to the proprietress. He introduced me to her as Mr. Jones of Nebraska. After Stubbs had ordered a bottle of champagne, she went over and brought two swell girls, who sat down beside us and helped us to drink the wine. We stayed there a few minutes, watching them dancing and drinking. There were quite a number of men in the place. Then Stubbs said, ‘Let us be going,’ and we went into two other places of a similar character.”

“And you found Martha in one of them!” exclaimed Hill with bated breath.

“No, Bob; have patience. When we came out of the third place we’d been in, he said, ‘Now while we’re out I’ll show you the other side of it.’ So he hired a cab, and we drove over to the west side of the city and stopped at the corner of Lake and Peoria streets, a miserable looking locality, where any number of tough-looking saloons abound and colored people, men and women were drinking. Some kind of music was heard in every one of them. We left the cab at the corner, and walked a little way up Peoria street. Nearly every house was lit up. We stopped in front of a two-story frame, where a flight of steps led up to the front door. As I followed Stubbs up I could hear the noise of a lot of women jabbering away to one another. I felt like turning back, but followed my guide into the front room, where a piano was being played. The first sight of the place shocked me. There were girls in short skirts, drinking and smoking. Some of them were

sitting on fellows' knees. I felt disgusted. We walked through to the back end of the place. It was like two rooms. We sat down at a table, I with my face to the wall. I felt ashamed to look at the depraved characters, and wished I was out. Two of the women came and sat beside us. Stubbs ordered two quarts of beer. When it came, a brazen little strumpet, who would persist in talking to me, said she wouldn't drink beer. She was near drunk at the time. So Stubbs told her she could have what she liked. She ordered a cocktail. Just then a big, coarse, raw-boned woman came toward us. 'This is Kate Kanter, who keeps the house,' he whispered to me. Stubbs asked her what she'd take. She said she didn't feel well; if she took anything she'd take a glass of port wine. 'Bring us a bottle of port,' said Stubbs to the waiter. There were just four chairs at the table, and the Kanter woman was still standing. She noticed the impudent little trash that would keep chinning to me. 'Get up,' she says, 'you're piped!' So she chased her and sat down on the seat. When the waiter came back with the port he brought four glasses and filled them. I said I preferred the beer, so the Kanter woman picked up the extra glass and said, 'Here, Clem, take a glass of wine.' I just turned my head to see whom she was addressing, and there stood Martha within three feet of me. I was paralyzed for a second. I jumped up, nearly upsetting the table. I couldn't believe my eyes for a moment; I felt my hair rising on my head. Martha recognized me the moment I stood up. She was in the act of raising the glass to her mouth. It fell from her hand, and was shattered to pieces on the floor. She reeled back and fell into a seat that goes around the room. She held her head down. The Kanter woman got mad. 'Never mind, Kate,' said Stubbs, 'it's all right. I'll pay for everything.' Then she

muttered something about an old flame, and breaking the glasses. As she turned to leave us, her attention was attracted to a number of young men who were sitting at a table talking. 'Are you fellows going to waste your time here all night? Why don't you take some of the girls upstairs?' A sudden thought struck me. 'I'll take this one,' I said, going over to where Martha was still holding her head down, and took her by the arm. She stood up, turning her head from me. Stubbs tried to stop me. 'Come on!' he said.

"'No! I'm going with this girl.'

"'Will I wait for you?'

"'No, I'll find my own way.'"

"My God!" exclaimed Hill. "Who would have ever thought my sister would have turned out like that?" He looked toward the ceiling and then bowed his head in agony, the tears streaming from his eyes.

"Bob," said Matthew, rising, "don't think I had any improper desire for your sister, no more than I would have for my own."

"I believe you, Matt," said Hill, between his tears.

"But I knew it was the only opportunity I would have to talk to her." Howard paused to give Hill some time to compose himself.

"Go on!"

"Well, when we went up into the room, a miserable looking place, the bed all topsy-turvy, a couple of chairs and a little table with a candle on it, a couple of wash basins with dirty water standing in them. I felt sick at heart. We both sat down. She commenced to cry, and so did I—I couldn't help it. After a time, I asked her what terrible misfortune brought her to such a place. At first she'd tell me nothing; begged of me not to ask her. I appealed to

her, she trembled like an aspen. For half an hour I implored her to tell me. 'You must leave this place,' I said to her. She shook her head. I couldn't get a thing out of her. She begged me to go and leave her; to forget I had ever seen her. Well, after we had been in the room for, maybe, forty minutes, a young woman knocked at the door and said the missus wanted to know how long we were going to occupy the room.

"Martha asked me to give her a dollar for the woman and go. I said I wouldn't; I was going to stay till she told me her story. She became frightfully nervous, but I was determined. The girl still stood outside the door to await an answer. Martha again appealed to me. 'You don't want me, Matthew?' she said, looking up entreatingly into my face. 'No,' I said, 'but I'll stay till you tell me your trouble.' 'Then the woman will want five dollars if we occupy this room all night.' I went outside and gave the girl, who was waiting, a five-dollar bill.

"The girl made a coarse jest of me being the right kind of a sport and left us. We sat down again. I saw Martha was faint. I asked her when she had eaten last. Could I send out for anything? She said I could. So she called a man, and I told him to go out and bring in the nicest supper he could get for two; to bring up a bottle of port wine. I gave him a dollar for himself. It must have been two in the morning, but, wherever he got it, he brought in a first-class meal—chicken and salad, and coffee and rolls, and the bottle of wine. I felt faint myself. I wanted something real bad. Martha set the table. As we were eating I could see she was thinking. Something of the old look began to come into her face. I kept her in talk, reminding her of the day she left. She smiled as she told me of the girl chaffing me as she was about to step on the

train as to why I didn't kiss her. I pleaded guilty, Bob. Something of the old feeling came over me and, when we had dined and wined, I said, 'I'll kiss you now, Martha, though you can never be my Martha.' This made her sad, but I kissed her. Then she cried again. Her heart seemed to open to me, and she began to tell her story, from the moment she arrived in Chicago until I recognized her in the Peoria street house. My blood ran cold as she went on."

Hill sobbed bitterly during the recital. At its conclusion, he rose from his seat, and, clasping his hands, looked toward the ceiling, exclaiming:

"Oh! is there no protecting angel to guard the footsteps of our poor innocent girls, or an avenging God to smite the demons who are guilty of such atrocities! By the eternal! I live now but for one purpose, and that is to bathe my hands in the blood of those who trapped my sister, and I appeal to the ever-living God to strengthen my hand. Did she tell you where this Rosenthal could be found?"

"No."

"Then I will find him, if it costs me my life and all I have of the world's goods."

"Now keep calm, Bob, it's no use of your getting yourself so excited."

"I can't help it. What I want is, REVENGE!" He fell back in his chair in a swoon.

Howard ran, got some water, and bathed his temples. In time he recovered.

"What are we to do, Matt?" he said, as soon as he had composed himself. "I can't leave her there."

"Well, wait. I am not done yet. About four in the morning I wanted to go. She wouldn't let me. She said I would likely be robbed or murdered before I went two blocks; that more than likely fellows were on the lookout



WHAT I WANT IS REVENGE

for me. I felt a little scary and somewhat embarrassed. I said, 'I'll go. Just show me to the door.' "

" 'No, you won't, Matthew. I don't want your blood on my head. You must sleep here,' pointing to the bed. 'Well, where will you sleep?' without a thought. 'Oh never mind me. I'm used to staying up. I can sleep all day. Wait and I'll get you some clean sheets.' She went and got them and made the bed for me. 'Now I will go out, while you undress yourself,' just as modest as any chamber maid could be. I took some of my things off and got into bed. In a few minutes she peeped in, and seeing me in bed came in and tidied up the room a bit, leaving me a clean towel and some water to wash myself when I got up. I remained quiet, watching her. She spread my clothes neatly on the back of one of the chairs and, tip-toeing over to the bed, she stooped over and gently placed her lips to mine. I heard her say, 'God bless you, Matt.' I let on I was asleep, but never felt more miserable in my life. She left the room noiselessly. I didn't wake up until near 9 in the morning. I raised myself on my elbow, and looking out saw her stretched full length on the floor, right up against the door, so that no one could open it without pushing her away. I got up, dressed, and washed myself. When my toilet was complete I went over and shook her. 'Martha, Martha, wake up!' She stared vacantly for a moment and then arose."

" 'You're ready to go?' she said.

" 'Yes, and you're going to go with me.'

" 'She shook her head. 'No, Matthew, there is no place for me but this, until the woman of this house, tiring of me, casts me out to find another place still more degraded.' I begged and appealed to her to come away with me. I would send her away to any place she chose to rest and reflect,

and I would devise some plan that she could come back to her old home after a time, but to no avail."

" 'If I thought you would betray me,' she said, finally, 'and my father and mother would find out the life I've been leading, I would commit suicide.' Seeing that my entreaties were of no avail, I prepared to leave. She placed her arms around my neck and kissed me. 'Matthew, I have spent a happy night in spite of my tears. Good-bye, and forget you ever saw me. My friends think I'm dead; it will be cruel if you undeceive them.' As I was going along the passage on the lower floor I saw four of the worst looking ruffians it is possible to imagine watching me, and I remembered her warning of the night before. As she shook hands with me outside the door I offered her money. She refused to accept it. So I forced a twenty-dollar bill down her breast, and walked rapidly away."

"Revenge! Revenge!" exclaimed Hill, livid with rage. "But first I must take her from that den of infamy."

"But what if she won't go?" inquired Howard.

"Then I'll kill her!" his teeth firmly clenched.

"Well, Robert, I hope you'll do nothing rash. Remember they're a desperate crowd and, if any attempt is made to take her away by force, blood will be shed. Hadn't we better see the police?"

"No, I'll be my own police. The police that tolerate such places are guilty, yes more so, than the women that run them. If the police were any good they would have found her in the woman Blomgarten's who bought her from the slaver Ike Rosenthal. No, Matthew, I'll not trust the police, and, if I go to take her, woe be to the man or woman who tries to stop me!"

"Well, when are you going to make the attempt?"

"Tomorrow."

"Then I'll go with you. But, remember, we'll have to use some diplomacy."

"I don't want you to run any risk, Matthew. You can, however, show me the place."

"Bob, I don't like to hear you talk that way. Don't think I'm a coward."

"I know you're not, Matt. Forgive me."

"Well, I'll tell you what we'll do. There's no use in going there until the evening. We'll leave here by the 4:30 tomorrow afternoon. You can send word around to the mill in the morning that you're sick and I'll go over about noon. You know I've some stock in the firm and tell them I'm going to take you to see a doctor. That will excuse us both. What we'll do with her when we get her we can decide after. So go right home now like a good fellow, and go straight to bed."

CHAPTER XXV.

BAFFLED.

Matt Howard and Robert Hill reached Chicago a little after seven in the evening of the day they determined to rescue Martha. Howard had hard work to curb Bob's impatience.

"Robert," he said, "we have plenty of time. In the first place we will have to make some arrangements as to where we will bring her. The clothing I have brought in the case will fit her well enough, but she must have some place to put them on, and we will have to stay in Chicago tonight anyway."

Hill had to admit the force of Howard's argument. Howard was a business man and wanted to go about things methodically. Robert Hill wanted fight. He had a "44" in his pocket and determined to use it on the first man or woman who would bar his passage. Howard had a "38"; he was equally determined, but had much more discretion.

"Do you remember the name of that hotel where they found her bundle?"

"No, but I can find it. It's on Clark street."

"Well, we'll go there first, and secure rooms. We can leave the clothes we have for her there, except the cloak; that we'll take with us in the cab we engage." After registering at the hotel, Howard insisted they should have something to eat before they started out. Hill was chafing at the delay.

"You'll have to keep cool, Bob. Remember this is no child's play. We may have some trouble."

"I'm ready for it," replied his friend.

"So am I; but, if we can avoid it, so much the better."

It was 8:30 when they left the hotel. Howard went toward a cab stand which was near by, followed by Robert. They walked the line till Howard accosted a man who had a pair of good-looking horses. The man, seeing them looking at his rig, said, "Carriage, sir?"

"I was just looking at that pair of horses of yours. They seem pretty good stock."

"As good as is in the city in this business, sir."

"You own them yourself?"

"Yes."

"Have you been long in the business?"

"Over twenty years."

"I suppose you have a family?"

The man looked at him for a second or so before he gave him an answer.

"Yes, but my family's grown up."

"The reason I ask you that question is, you being a man of family you are likely to have some sympathy with the project we have in view. It is this: A girl in whom we are interested has gone astray; she's in a low-down dive on the west side and we are going to take her out; we're relatives of hers. I will pay you well. It may take one hour or it may take four."

"I don't care how long it takes if it's an honest deal. Where is it?" inquired the cabman.

"Peoria street, near Lake."

"A pretty tough locality. Probably you may have a scrap if she don't want to leave willingly, or maybe they'll try to prevent her from going with you. I'll go anyhow."

Of course, if they do any damage to my cab I'll expect you to make it good."

"I'll do that," replied Howard. "I am a responsible man."

"Well, you look all right," replied the cabman, looking them over critically.

"You get her into my cab, and let me get the horses started. I'll bring her to wherever you want me." With that they started out.

As they reached the corner of Lake street, the cabman pulled up his horses. Matt Howard put his head out of the window. "Go round the corner."

"No, you get out here and go and get the girl. When you're gone I'll drive around and stop about fifty feet from the house with my horses' heads in the way I'm going to go. As soon as I see you coming down the steps with her I'll drive up. Of course, if she comes willingly and they let her go we'll have no trouble, but if there's any fuss get her in the cab, and, one or both of you jump in beside her and I'm off. I know this crowd around here better than you men." The judgment of the cabman impressed Martha's friend and brother favorably. They told the cabman the number of the house they were going to.

"I know the place; it's one of the toughest."

"Now, Robert," said Matthew, as they turned into the street, "you go over on the other side and I'll go in; you stay till you see me at the front window. As soon as you do come right over. If she sees you, the poor thing might take flight."

This remark brought tears to her brother's eyes.

Matthew Howard went straight up the steps and into the front room of Kate Kanter's dive. He looked around, but Martha was not in sight.

"Good evening!" said a young damsel in short skirts. "Going to buy a drink?"

"Sure, sit down. What will you take?"

"Oh, a bottle of beer."

"Bring us two quarts," addressing the waiter. "Perhaps some of your sisters would take a little?" smiling at the girl. When the beer was brought Matthew Howard had a number of the girls around him. He laughed and joked with them, at the same time glancing around in hopes of seeing the object of his search. The two bottles of beer didn't last but a few minutes. Matt ordered two more. "I'm out for a good time," he said, "let us enjoy ourselves," assuming a jollity entirely different to the bent of his mind.

The first girl to whom he spoke on entering thought to contribute to his enjoyment by sitting on his knee. He laughed as if it was just what he desired. Three sinister-looking fellows sat at a table with three women, who left them to join those already around Howard, their men, being regular hangers-on who lived on the wages of sin, offering no objection. And, as it was too early for the assembling of the regular patrons, they flocked around Howard as the only prospective customer in the place. Matthew told the waiter to take our friends, alluding to the three men who sat alone, a couple of bottles. They all three smiled and bowed their acknowledgment to him, as the waiter laid the bottles on the table with the remark:

"The gentleman wants you to take a drink with him."

Matthew waved his hand and bowed to them as if they were old college chums.

"Weren't you here the night before last?" said one of the girls who had just joined the group, looking at him.

"Yes," he replied. "Where's my girl?"

"Oh, you were with Clem; she's skipped." Howard felt as if a knife had pierced him.

"Don't you know where she's gone?" he blurted out.

"No, she never said a word to anyone of us. I don't believe the missus knows where she is."

"I expect a friend outside," said Matt, now totally down-hearted, "you'll excuse me." He went to the front window and pulled the blind aside. He could see Robert Hill place his hand to his left breast where he had his gun ready for action, rush across the street, and up the steps. As he entered the parlor he scared some of the women by his appearance. Matt met him at the door.

"She's gone!" he exclaimed. Hill staggered under the shock.

"Keep cool, Bob. We'll have to make inquiries of the missus." Hill fell into a seat.

"What's the matter with your friend?" inquired one of the women.

"He don't feel well this evening."

"Give him a drink," suggested one of the girls. "You go, Lulu, and warm him up." The blood had left Robert Hill's face. The girl gave him the glass, and he drank. He felt faint.

"I should like to have met Clem," remarked Howard. "She was a pretty nice girl."

"Oh, there's as good as ever she was here," said one of the girls, looking at the others for their approval.

"I believe so," said Howard, sharply, "but you know when a fellow's stuck on a girl he's apt to think there's no one like her."

"That's so," said an elderly dame. "Just as when a woman is stuck on a fellow. She thinks he's perfect."

There's Lulu's bloke over there, and I'm sure he's no beauty, and she thinks there's nobody like him."

"He's all right!" said Lulu, looking over approvingly at a fellow that any intelligent jury would convict on sight.

"Well, I want to see the mistress of the house. You girls can have some more beer. Waiter bring in a couple of quarts. Where's the mistress?" addressing the man who was waiting.

"She's in the kitchen, sir."

"Oh stay where you are," chimed in one of the women. "There's no use of you seeing her. She never scabs it on the girls, besides she has a bloke of her own." The girls laughed at this sally.

Matthew beckoned Bob to follow him. "I'll be back in a minute or two," he said to the party on leaving.

Kate Kanter nodded to the two young men when she saw them entering the place where she was.

"You were here the other night with Mr. Stubbs, weren't you?"

"Yes, ma'am, and I wanted to meet that girl Clem that I was with."

"Oh yes, I remember. She left immediately after you without saying a word. I thought probably you made a permanent appointment with her."

"No, she never said a word to me about leaving you."

"That's strange. I was sorry to lose her; she was about the best girl I had. You see she wasn't so much given to booze as the most of them."

"Then you've no idea where she is?"

"Not the slightest. She just put her shawl on, the girls told me after you had left, and walked right out."

"Do you think she went to any other house in the neighborhood?"

"No, I'm sure she didn't. I always treated her white, and I'm sure Clem wouldn't leave me for any place around here."

Robert Hill had to lean on a chair for support while listening to this dialogue—he was deathly pale.

"She was a real good girl," continued the Kanter woman, "and very popular."

Hill staggered back into the passage.

"Your friend don't seem well," remarked the woman.

"No, ma'am, I think I'll have to take him home."

Matthew Howard took his friend's arm as far as the front room, where he went in and paid for the last two bottles of beer he had ordered, and, telling the women he would see them later, they both left the place.

The cabman, seeing them come down the steps, drove up and seemed disappointed at their not having the object of their search with them.

"Wouldn't she come?" he inquired.

"She is not there," replied Howard.

"Perhaps you had better try some of the other places. There's lots of them around here."

Robert Hill threw himself on the back seat of the carriage. He was deathly sick. "I can't go any farther to-night. Take me to the hotel; I must lie down."

Matthew paid the cabman liberally, and told him to call for them at 8 p. m. sharp the following evening.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PLANNING.

The cabman, as prearranged, was in waiting at the hotel at the time appointed, to renew the search for the lost girl. Both Hill and Howard were at a loss as to how to commence, so decided to confer with the cabman, who knew the locality. On the cabman arriving at the rooms which Howard had secured, thinking they would have Martha for an occupant, after the usual salutation, Howard said: "You see, my good man, we have little knowledge of those places we have to visit in search of the party we seek, so will have to depend in a great measure upon your advice. How do you think we should go about it?"

"Well, in my opinion, you should apply for a police escort, who would take you through whatever places you wanted to go to."

"Is it possible that the police are cognizant of such places, and still allow them to exist?"

"Young man, you have a good deal to learn how things are run in this city. Those houses—the worst of them—are under police regulation, which means, go as you please, so long as you get the dough and divide up."

"If that's so, then I object to any police escort, as they would be just as likely to thwart our object as to aid us. Besides, I am prejudiced against the police; not but there may be many honest, sincere men in the service, but those who profit by the infamy of those institutions also control the force."

"That's my opinion too!" exclaimed Howard, nodding to the cabman.

"No doubt," replied the cabman, "but the only use the policeman would be to us would be to show you around. You need not tell him your mission; he would probably think your only purpose would be to visit the ranches and inspect the stock, for which he would likely receive a commission from the housekeepers, if you should spend any amount of money in their places."

"I would very much like to dispense with the service of the policemen," said Hill, "as I am very much afraid of them."

"Well, I'll tell you what you might do. You know I'll have to take care of my horses, and when you get the girl I'll play my part, but I'm not the proper party to jolly the people in the resorts, and probably this may be an all night job."

"What is it you suggest then?"

That you secure the service of one of the fellows that hang around such places, if it's only to show you the vealy side of life. A few dollars and drinks will do, but, if you tell him your mission, you will have to pay him his price with a contingent fee if you get her."

"I like that plan," said Howard, "but where can we get the man?"

"That's easy. You know the place we were at last night?"

"Yes."

"Well, Kate Kanter is a fairly good type of her class, and, as you told me, thought a good deal of the girl you're looking for. I think she'd be willing to help you; probably she would not like the girl to be in a worse place than her own."

"Is that possible!" exclaimed Hill.

"Well, young man, after you've visited some of the places I expect you'll have to go through tonight you'll think Kate Kanter's dive respectable."

Howard felt a sickening sensation at his heart to think the girl he had loved so dearly could become so depraved.

Hill's brow darkened, his teeth firmly set. There was desperation in his stolidness. "Let us start out!" he said. "This delay is killing me."

"Let us go, then," said Howard.

"Wait a moment," urged the cabman, "I'm not considering myself. I am satisfied you gentlemen will treat me right, but I think we should have a plan of campaign before going to the Kanter house. What I suggest, in the first instance, is that when you visit the place you should act as if you were a couple of sports out for a good time. Maybe you can learn something in advance. Perhaps they know where the girl is, and if you pump them it may make our job easy. If not, you can ask Kate to recommend to you a fellow that knows the route and is willing to show you the sights for a consideration. Of course, you'll have to buy a little beer for the girls at Kanter's place, and probably a bottle of wine for Kate herself, so as to put her in good humor."

"Oh! that makes no difference," replied Howard, "so long as she'll recommend the right fellow."

On the way to Kanter's, Howard advised Hill to let him do the talking. "You know, Bob, you're too serious, and can't dissemble. You wear a frown when a laugh is needed. You know I am just as serious as you are on this mission, but I can put on a pleasant face and act different to what I feel."

"Friend Matt, it is very hard for me to look pleasant under those circumstances. You know what Martha was to me, she was more than sister. She was my pal, my sweetheart. I had built such great hopes in her future, and would never have surrendered her willingly to any one but yourself, as we all felt confident some day you would have her for your wife, but that's all past now." A tear stole down Hill's cheek which he brushed away with his handkerchief.

"Console yourself, Bob. What is is, and we cannot change it. Our sole object now is to rescue her, and I am sure she will not turn a deaf ear to your appeal. You are virtually the head of her family, and it is her terror of them which she dreads more than all. As for me, whatever I was to her once, I am now but a friend, and so she rates me. Refusing me is one thing, refusing you is another."

"Just as you say, Matt. I will be guided by your judgment, and act as best I can."

Arriving at the Kanter house, Howard no sooner entered the parlor than a number of the girls came forward to greet him.

"Good evening, sport," was his first greeting by one of the girls. Her sisters in misfortune smiled benignly on him.

"Hello, girls! How are you all?" was Howard's remark.

"Ah, I see you have a friend with you," remarked the first one who addressed him. "Bring him in, we'll make things pleasant for both of you; won't we, girls?"

"Sure, we will," was the response.

Bob Hill, in spite of his determination to look pleasant, frowned upon the damsels.

"He's a little shy," remarked Howard. "You girls will have to excuse him."

"That will wear off," said one, "when he's here a little while."

"Let's sit down," said Howard. "I want to buy a drink."

"Well, choose your partners," remarked one, and some seven women lined up in a row.

"We'll do that a little later," said Howard, "and in the meantime I am going to treat you all."

"That's the way to talk," remarked one of the women, while the others smiled on Howard.

The entire group sat down, two of the girls pulling up a table, so as to connect with another and so make room for all.

The waiter stood in expectancy.

"Bring us a half dozen bottles of beer."

The girls looked at one another, and then ogled Howard, as if in admiration. They also glanced at Hill, but, his chilly looks frosting them, they paid little attention to him, to his great relief.

When the beer was brought, one of the girls who seemed most gabby looked at Howard and, giving him one of her most seductive smiles, said, "Would you object to treating our friends?" glancing over at a table where four of the male hangers-on were seated.

"Not on your life. They're as welcome as the flowers in May."

The girl grabbed two of the bottles and took them over to where her male friends were seated. She had a whispered conversation with them. They looked over in the direction where Howard and Hill were seated and nodded. One of them waved his hand toward Hill, as a friendly greeting. Howard held his up, in reply.

As there were but few visitors at Kate Kanter's estab-

lishment up to that time of the evening, and the women had but little liquid refreshment, the remaining four bottles of beer were consumed in short order.

"Bring us six more," ordered Howard to the waiter, who stood ever ready to supply the wants of visitors who had the price, or to bounce those whose presence was objectionable.

When the beer was bought and paid for, Hill slipped a half dollar into his hand. He smiled and expressed his thanks.

"Take a couple of bottles over to our friends in the rear," remarked Howard, in an off-hand way. The girl who had served on the former occasion took the two bottles over, and, on returning, said, "The gentlemen at the rear table wish to thank you." Howard looked over toward them in a very friendly manner, which was reciprocated by the men in the rear.

One of the girls who sat next to Hill began to get familiar with him. "Wake up!" she said, placing her hand on his knee. "What's the matter with you? Don't you know you're in good company?"

This was something Hill did not agree with, but he returned a sickly smile in acknowledgment.

Howard, seeing Hill's embarrassment, determined to bring the seance to a close as soon as possible.

"Where's Kate?" he remarked, in a manner as if they were old friends.

"She's up dressing," replied one of the girls.

"I would like to see her."

"She'll be down soon," replied the girl.

In a brief time Kate Kanter put in an appearance, and in looking into the parlor recognized Howard as a man who had been a visitor to her institution on former occasions.

She smiled at him and he beckoned her to approach. When she reached the group she extended her hand to Howard, who gave her a friendly shake.

"Will you join us?"

"No, not now; but I will take a drink with you."

Howard reached her a glass of the beer.

"I may want to see you a little later," he remarked.

"Oh yes, about that girl of yours, I suppose. Well, I never heard of her since."

This information struck deep into the heart of Hill, whose gloomy disposition nothing but an interview face to face with his sister could dispel.

Howard was disappointed. He had hoped to have learned something about Martha at the House of Kanter.

"I want to have a talk with you anyway, Miss Kanter, when you have time."

"Then you'll find me in the kitchen," said the woman of the house, remarking before she left she hoped he and his friend would have a pleasant time.

The information conveyed inadvertently to Howard as to Kate Kanter having no knowledge of Martha Hill's whereabouts depressed him so that he said, turning to the waiter, "Bring some more beer. I want to have a talk with Miss Kanter, and will pay you when I come back. You'll excuse us, girls, for a time?" and, beckoning to Bob, they left the women abruptly.

Miss Kanter greeted them cordially, with the remark, "Well, boys, what can I do for you?"

"To be candid with you, Miss Kanter, on a former occasion you expressed a friendly feeling for Miss Clementina Montague. We are here to try and find her. We are both very much interested in her, how much we don't care

to let you know, but we want to find her, and we want you to inform us as to the best method of locating her."

"I am sure I don't know how to advise you. I was sorry when she left. She was a good girl, and I don't believe she could have a better place than this. I always treated her white."

Hill turned away his head to hide the look of contempt he had for Kate Kanter's estimate of a good girl, and her absolute disregard for morality.

"Do you think she sought refuge in some other house?"

"That I don't know. More than likely she did. You see, women who choose this life seldom or never change their way, unless they can find some sucker to marry them, and when he does, he should be either not particular in playing the cuckold, or keep a close watch on them. Fellows like those you see in the front marry girls for an object, and expect to be kept by them from their earnings in houses like this, but Clem was a different kind of girl. She never warmed up to any of those fellows, and always kept them at a distance. She didn't care much for the booze either, and was very popular."

This praise struck deep into the heart of her brother, who surmised what such popularity meant.

"But, I assure you, gentlemen," said Kate, continuing, "if I knew where she was I would tell you, as I had a warm feeling for Clem, and was sorry when she left me."

"Do you think we would be likely to find her if we made a search?"

"You might."

"Well, Miss Kanter, we are not very well acquainted around those parts. Do you think you could recommend somebody to show us around?"

"I probably could. Wait till I see who's in the front."

Kate Kanter went toward the parlor, and in a few moments returned with a young man. He was about twenty-five years of age, of robust build. His sallow countenance was adorned with a black mustache, which was also the color of his hair. He was low-browed, and of a generally sinister appearance.

Howard and Hill both gazed at him with some misgivings.

"Tony, shake hands with those two gentlemen. They want you to show them around a little."

Tony shook hands with both Hill and Howard.

"Now, Tony," said the woman, addressing him, "I want you to treat those men right, and see that they don't get into trouble. I have no doubt they will do the right thing by you."

"I'll take care of them," remarked Tony, in a confident air.

"They have a special mission," remarked Kate, "and I want you to know in advance I am in favor of it, so help them all you can."

"I'll do the best I know how."

"They will explain it to you," said Kate, "when you start out."

Tony nodded.

"I am very thankful to you," said Howard, pleased at the Kanter woman's business methods, "and I would like to buy a bottle of wine before we go."

"Never mind. Some other time. But you can treat the girls."

"That we will," replied Howard, "but I want you to accept a little present," placing his hand in his vest pocket and producing a five-dollar bill, which he slipped into her hand. She thanked him. The three men then repaired to

the parlor, where Howard paid for the drinks he had ordered, and told the waiter to bring in a fresh supply. They then prepared to take their departure, the girls protesting against their going, and one of them telling them:

“You don’t know what you’re missing if you leave here.”

Another said, “Stay boys. If you go farther you’ll fare worse.”

Two or three of them tried to block the way. “Cut it out!” growled Tony, “we’re going out on a little business.”

The girls fell back as if they had heard a peremptory command from a superior, and offered no further obstacle to the men’s departure.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SEARCH.

On Howard, Hill, and their escore reaching where the carriage stood, Howard apologized to the cabman for keeping him waiting.

"Never mind me," said the driver, "I am used to that kind of thing; besides," smiling, "I'm engaged by the hour."

"That's so," remarked Howard, "but probably a little later we may have a little refreshments, and, of course, you're counted in."

Tony, who had been listening to the dialogue, beckoned Howard to come a little away, and, in a tone of voice not intended for the cabman, said, "You don't need him. All the houses here are within a few blocks, and if you want to visit many of them it will take some time, so there is no use wasting money. If I was you I would pay him off and let him go."

"Thanks for your consideration, Tony, but we may need him, as we have a special mission, and I may as well make you acquainted with it at once. You knew Clem Montague, that lived at Kanter's?"

"Sure. I knew her well, and she was all right. We have been wondering what became of her."

"That's our trouble too, and we are very close friends of hers. We want you to help us to find her, and if you do we'll reward you well."

"What do you want to find her for? Do you want to 'pinch' her? If you do, count me out."

"No, no. We are her friends and want to help and not harm her."

"If I was sure of that, I would not mind lending you a hand, but I'd like to know what you want with her. Do you want to ship her to another place? Have you a customer for her? If you have, I'd want to stand in."

Howard was embarrassed for a reply, but was pleased that his friend Hill had no share in the conversation, as the cold-blooded proposition of their scout would assuredly have roused his ire.

"Our intention, if we find her, is to bring her home to her people, to provide for her, reclaim her, and try to make her respectable."

"I'm afraid you're wasting your time, but as Kate wants me to help you I'll do it. Of course, my time's worth something."

"I will treat you generously. I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll give you ten dollars now to begin with, and, if we succeed in finding her through your aid I will add forty more. That will make fifty—not a bad night's work."

"Gee! you fellows must want her real bad. I wouldn't give fifty for a dozen like her, and in my opinion when you get her you won't be able to hold her."

"That needn't concern you. Here's your ten to begin with."

"All right, boss, come along. If she's in this district we'll get her, but you'd better keep a little in the background, because, if she sees you, she may fly the coop, as she did before."

This practical but disheartening suggestion gave Howard a chill. He remembered his experience with her. He,

however, had hopes that the sight of her brother, and his determination that she should go with him, would more than offset any scruples she might have and come willingly. If not, Howard dreaded the consequences, because Robert Hill's determined manner warranted him in the belief that should she refuse to come peacefully her brother would resort to violence.

"Well, let us be going," remarked Howard, "it's already getting late."

"Plenty of time," replied their guide. "In the next street there's over a dozen places. So you can have your hackman drive to the next corner, and wait for us. We'll walk over."

As they turned the corner of the street they had set out for, the first house they approached was of similar construction to the one Kate Kanter controlled. There was a flight of steps up to the floor above the basement. The face of a girl seemed glued to the window-pane, where the curtain was drawn aside. As she saw the three men approach, she tapped vigorously on the glass. Seeing the men's intention to visit the house, she immediately left her place of look-out and met the men at the parlor door with what she intended for, a bewitching smile.

"Hello Tony!" she said, on seeing the guide.

"How do, Megg?" was his reply. "How's business?"

"Rotten."

"Well, come and take a drink. Here's a couple of gentlemen visitors."

Tony and the girl led the way to a table, where they sat down. The girl looked at Tony as if waiting for a cue. Tony whispered to the girl, "I see you've got Daisy here, give her the steer to come over." In the meantime another damsel came to occupy a vacant seat.

"That seat's engaged," said Tony, pulling the chair away from her. Daisy came forward in response to a beck from the first woman. She seemed to be about sixteen years of age, of still younger appearance, and wore short skirts.

"Sit down, Daisy, and join us," was Tony's greeting. The youthful appearance of the girl discomfited Howard and Hill, who were loth to be seen in her company. The importance of their mission, however, necessitated their tolerance.

Howard ordered some beer, while Tony joked with the two girls. Neither Howard nor Hill were in a mood to either waste time, or enter into conversation, both men being impatient to continue their search, if Martha Hill was not there.

Tony came to the point, when he asked the elder of the two, "How many girls do they employ here?"

The girl thought for a moment, as if counting them, and at length said, "Nine."

Tony's practiced eye ran over those present, counting seven. "Where's the other two?"

"They're upstairs; they've got friends."

"I was looking for an old girl of mine," remarked Tony, in an offhand manner.

"What's her name?"

"Clem Montague. She used to be at Katè Kanter's."

"She's not here. One of the girls upstairs is a little Jewess, and the other's a very stout woman."

Tony looked over at his two companions, who showed a desire to go farther.

"We're going to leave you girls," said Tony, rising. "Me and my friend were just passing. We thought we'd call in—probably see you later."

They visited about a dozen places of a similar character,

in all of which Tony seemed to be fairly well known to some of the habitués.

As the night advanced, hilarity seemed to increase in the places visited. In some of them the girls wished to make freedom with Howard and Hill. When about to go too far, Tony's "Cut it out" seemed to have a deterrent effect, which was coupled with the remark, "We just looked in to buy a couple of bottles of beer."

Howard and Hill ultimately came to the conclusion they had the right fellow with them, and saw how difficult their mission would have been without a guide. All three men refrained from taking much of the beer, the object of their search requiring them to keep their heads cool. Tony sipped at his, which seemed to affect him very little.

The cabman followed them around somewhat in the rear of the trio. This caused no comment, as the women in the windows and on the doorsteps were used to such circumstances, believing that he had a slumming party for his fare. As the night wore on, Howard and Hill became both weary and despondent. It was about 2 a. m., while passing a restaurant, when Howard said, "Let us go in here, I must have some refreshments. You please notify the cabman," addressing their guide.

When all were seated, Howard advised Tony and the hackman to order what they wanted. Hill would have but a cup of coffee. He didn't feel like eating, nor did Howard, who felt very much disheartened at the fruitlessness of their search.

"Did you get any tidings of her?" was the inquiry of the cabman, who had been trailing behind the searchers, without having an opportunity to communicate with them.

"Not a word," replied Howard. "No one seems to know anything as to where she is."

"We'll find her sure, if she's in this district," remarked Tony, in a confident manner. "There's a good many places to visit yet."

"There seems to be an entire colony of such places," said Hill, who up to this time had taken little part in the conversation.

"Yes, this is one of the segregated districts," remarked the cabman. "Nothing's out of order here, only murder, and that's no uncommon occurrence in this territory."

"What do you suggest, Tony?" inquired Howard.

"That we keep going. It's early yet."

Howard pulled out his watch, which registered 2:30 a. m.

"Yes, let us look further," said Robert Hill, in his anxiety to find the lost one.

After paying their score they set out, the cabman to see to his conveyance, Tony to lead the two men so vitally interested.

Turning into Lake street, Tony stopped in front of a basement. There were hieroglyphics in Chinese characters facing you as you looked down into the tunnel-like aperture, where all seemed as dark as a dungeon.

Hill and Howard looked at one another as in doubt of the advisability of following Tony, who was already half way down.

"Let us go down," said Hill, following the man in advance. Tony shoved open the door without knocking, and walked in, followed by the men he was escorting.

On entering the basement their further progress was barred by a counter "L" shaped, which effectually prevented any further progress to the interior. The rear of the basement was shut off by what seemed a canvas partition about seven feet high.

"Hello, John, how are you?" said the guide, saluting a rather large Chinaman, who was on the opposite side of the counter.

"Velly well."

The Chinaman looked from Tony to the two stalwart men behind him with some misgivings.

"All right, John, friends of ours," leaving a dollar note on the counter, and, at the same time, lifting up the swinging part of the counter and walking in, followed by the two men.

"We're going to hit the pipe, John."

The Chinaman salaamed to his three visitors, as they passed behind the screened part of the basement, toward the rear. The place was in semi-gloom, the only light being given from a number of Chinese lanterns hung from the low ceiling. A peculiar, and somewhat offensive odor permeated the place, which assailed both the nostrils and stomachs of the two countrymen, who were unaccustomed to such haunts. As their eyes became accustomed to the light they noticed a number of lounging places of crude lumber, arranged as double-deckers close to the walls on both sides of the basement, from some of which a faint smoke was emanating, while discordant murmurings were heard from others. A little way from the entrance, a Chinaman sat before a bench, on which was an array of peculiar-shaped pipes. A spirit lamp throwing off a small blue flame was on the bench before him. There was a plate also on the bench, on which was a piece of dark compound, resembling the shape and consistency of putty.

"Get me a pipe, John," said Tony, in familiar manner.

The Chinaman immediately got a piece of the compound, about the size of a large pea, on the end of what resembled a bodkin, and held it over the flame, twisting it

in a manner to prevent it from falling from the skewer-like utensil he held in his hand, while he was preparing it. Tony nudged his two associates to follow him in a tour around the basement. Looking into the bunks as they passed, many of them were occupied by persons of both sexes, some in a comatose condition. Others, who were still smoking, gazed at their visitors in an imbecile manner. As they reached one they noticed a fairly well-dressed female, lying with her face to the wall. Tony unceremoniously reached for her head and turned her face to the front for inspection. Her countenance was a perfect blank, except for a sickly smile with which she looked at her visitor, who passed on. In other of the lounging places were other females, young and old. To each Tony gave a casual examination to see if the party they were in search of was one of the inmates.

Howard and Hill showed some impatience. "Let us get out of here," exclaimed Howard. "This is horrible."

"What about my pipe?" said Tony, laughing, as they reached the Chinaman, who had been cooking the coke. He offered the pipe.

"Never mind, John, we haven't time," remarked Tony to him.

The Chinaman looked at all three men. His countenance portraying no visible expression any more than would have had a wax figure. Reaching the street, Howard and Hill took a deep draught of the fresh morning air into their lungs, which was a great relief to both.

"Awful!" exclaimed Howard. Bob Hill was dumb. He seemed as if he was prepared for anything.

Tony laughed at Howard's exclamation. "There's worse than that," he remarked.

"Hardly possible," was Howard's rejoinder.

As they went down Lake street Tony stood in front of a saloon. "This is a tough joint," he remarked. "One of the worst, but the fellow has a pull, in fact he is influential in city affairs. Let us go in, but I don't expect to find Clem here."

"Let us go in anyhow," remarked Hill, in his eagerness to keep up the search. As they approached the bar they noticed a heavily set man, showily dressed, with a massive gold chain across his breast, extending to both of his vest pockets, with a large pendant hanging from the center. He was surrounded by a group which seemed in converse with him, and appeared to be enjoying the conversation, whatever the subject was, and he paid no attention whatever to the three men who had just entered.

Howard ordered the drinks. "I must have a little spirits," suggested Hill, "I don't feel well." The strain was telling on his vigorous constitution.

"Take a little brandy, then," suggested Howard. He and the guide ordered snitts of beer.

They were but a short time at the bar, when an elderly woman approached them with the inquiry, "Would you gentlemen like to go upstairs?" Howard looked at Tony to see if it met with his approval.

"Yes," he said, "we will go up in a few minutes. Will you take a drink with us?"

Howard ordered another round, after which the dame led them toward the stairs. "Fifty cents each, please," she said, as she approached the first landing. Howard gave her the amount demanded. The woman opened the door to a large room, where a number of nude women sat around in different postures—some on forms, others on their hunkers. One in particular they noticed gibbering to herself. Another seemed to be making a vain attempt to climb the wall

of the room. On the countenance of all the women was a sickly death-like pallor.

Howard and Hill gave a hasty glance around the room. "Let us go," said the latter, with baited breath.

When he reached the street Hill, turning to Howard, said with vehemence, "If my sister was in a place like that I would leave her there, as one eternally damned."

"If I had a sister," said Tony, "in a place like that, bad as I am, I would kill her. They ply them there with all the dope they want; they're a rotten crowd, and the man who is fascinated with a group like that should be unsexed."

"That place reminds me," said Howard, "of Dante's lines: 'Whoso enters here leaves hope behind!'"

"Where else?" said Hill, in a resolute manner. He looked at Howard for an answer, who, in turn, looked at Tony.

"Just as you please," Tony remarked, but, with a sudden thought, "I would like to try one more place."

"Then let us go," said Howard, "for I am beginning to be weary of this horrible experience."

"This is the place," remarked Tony, standing in front of a shabby-looking ramshackle of a building. "This fellow runs a black-and-tan institution."

"What is that?" inquired Howard.

"He mixes the blacks and whites. We want to be careful here." Entering the saloon they found a number of men and women at the bar, both Caucasians and Africans. The negresses looked particularly coarse. Howard felt some scare on seeing the motley group, but, being once in, there was nothing left but to go to the bar and order drinks. The women in close proximity ordered at the same time. Howard tendered a bill. The man behind the bar not only took the price of the drinks for the men, but for those ordered

by the women also. Howard looked at Tony, who just lifted his head to signify there was no use complaining.

Shut off from the bar by a partition was a room in the rear, from which a Babel of tongues could be heard. "We'll have to go back," whispered Tony, "I hear there's a good crowd behind." As the three men entered through swinging doors, three of the women followed them and solicited drinks. Howard, though chafing under their undue insolence, deemed it advisable to submit with the best grace possible, and looked at Hill as a warning to him to curb his temper.

While the drinks were being brought Tony took a promenade around the place, as if in search of some one. On returning, he hastily took his drink, saying, "Let us go." Two of the women, who were colored, remonstrated saying, "What's your hurry?" The men rose to go. The women went out in advance of them. As they entered the bar on their way out of the dive the two colored women closed in on Howard. The largest of them tried to grab him by the shoulders, while the other laid her hand on his watch chain.

"Let go, you black b——!" shouted Tony, striking her on the ear with all his might. She fell back with part of Howard's watch chain in her hand. "And you too," yelled Tony, striking the one who had attempted to pin Howard by the shoulders full in the face. There was an immediate rush of the men in the bar room to the place of conflict, one yelling, "Damn you, you strike my women I'll cut your heart out." Tony stood facing the colored men, at the same time shouting to his friends to get out. Hill, seeing Tony was about to be crowded by the miscreants, stood his ground, and struck right and left, his ponderous fist laying low all it came in contact with. "Get out!" again yelled Tony, during the respite for the moment that Hill's fist had pro-

duced, he himself backing toward the door as rapidly as he could, and at the same time confronting his opponents in as threatening a manner as the circumstances warranted. The cabman, who was close at hand, under the impression they had got the girl, opened the door of his cab, ready to receive his passengers. "Get in there!" yelled Tony, "never mind me." Howard entered the cab. Hill hesitated for a moment. "Get in!" shouted Tony, who had just landed on the fellow in advance of the gang. The cabman pushed Hill in, slammed the door, and, jumping on his seat, struck two of the contestants who were within reach vicious slashes across the face with his whip, and then striking his horses started off at a gallop. Hill, looking out of the window, saw a colored man with a knife or razor in his hand rush toward Tony, who side-stepped and ran for it, pursued by a half dozen negroes.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOUND.

The cabman made a detour of a few blocks in order to throw off the trail the vicious crowd which made a show of following them. When at a safe distance he pulled up his horses, so as to ask instructions.

"Where now?" he asked, as he saw Howard put his head out of the window of the cab.

"I would like to drive around to Kanter's, if it is not too late. I would like to find out what has become of the young man we had with us."

"All right, but I'll have to drive in to Peoria street from the north; it is hardly safe to go by Lake street."

On arriving at Kanter's, Howard instructed Hill to stay in the carriage. "I'll go in and find out what I can—I won't stay any time."

On entering the house, he looked around to see if their guide of the evening was present. Not noticing him, he went over to where Kate Kanter was sitting with a group of men and girls.

Kate, recognizing him, said, "What luck? Did you find her?"

"No," he whispered, "we had a row in one place we were at, and we got separated from Tony. I thought perhaps I would find him here."

"He's not arrived as yet. Will you wait?"

"No, but if he does come, will you please tell him we want to meet him here at 10 in the morning?"

"Yes, I'll tell him."

"Thank you. I want to pay for a drink and then I'll be going. I have a hack outside waiting for me." He then paid for three bottles of beer, enough to treat the group, and left.

On reaching the cab he was driven back to the hotel. There he paid the cabman liberally, notifying him that if they wanted his services they would find him at the stand.

That morning, before going to bed, the two friends had a consultation as to what would be their future line of action, both recognizing the difficulty of the proposition that confronted them.

"I don't know what to do for the best," said Hill. "I must admit I am very much disheartened."

"Well, we'll sleep on it," said Howard. "I'm done up, so I'll go to bed. We'll have time to talk it over before we see our guide in the morning—that is, if he was lucky enough to get away with his life."

"I'm ready for bed, too," remarked Hill, "so I'll turn in. Good night!"

The following morning Howard and Hill reviewed the situation at some length, both realizing the difficulty that faced them from the fact of the great multiplicity of houses to be visited, if a complete search of all had to be made.

"I'll tell you my opinion," said Howard, addressing his friend, "but, in advance I want you to disabuse your mind if you have any such thought of the notion that I am tired of the pursuit. My time's my own, and I am willing to keep it up for a month if need be, but we can do better."

"Well, what do you propose? I honor your judgment," said Hill.

"It is this: If we go around the same as we did last night for any length of time, and she gets to know we

are looking for her, she would go any length to avoid us, and, since my experience with the young man Kate Kanter recommended, I think we might safely intrust the whole matter to him. He to notify us by telegraph the moment he locates her, without giving her the slightest inkling that anyone was looking for her. On receipt of his message we could take the next train and get her."

"I think that's the best possible plan," remarked Hill.

"Then let us get away. It will be near ten when we get to Kanter's. If Tony is there, I'll make all the arrangements."

On reaching the lobby of the hotel, Howard secured a couple of telegraph blanks. Reaching Kanter's, Tony was there waiting for them. He laughed when he saw them coming in.

"That's a nice scrap you got me into last night," he said, smiling.

"Well, Tony," said Howard, shaking hands with him, "I must admit you're some scrapper."

"Your big friend," looking at Hill, "is pretty good with his dukes, too, but the trouble with that crowd that we ran up against last night is, they use razors on a man. That's the reason I shouted for you fellows to get out, as I knew what was coming. That's why I soaked the two strong-arm women. They're worse than the men, and I knew there was no use fooling with them."

"You did nobly, Tony," said Howard, "and we both feel grateful to you." Hill smiled his indorsement, and extended his hand to their guide of the night before as a further mark of his approval.

"Well, Tony, we have decided to change our program, and I am here to make a proposition to you. It is this: We recognize the big job it is to go around all those places, and

feel that we can't render you much service, and, as you know her, we intend to leave the whole matter in your hands. You to telegraph to us the moment you locate her, but don't say a word to her about us looking for her. We have come to the conclusion that if we went around many nights with you, she might find out we were looking for her and give us the slip. She's terribly nervous, and probably afraid of her brother, my friend here."

Tony looked up at Hill, it being the first intimation he had gotten of the close relationship between her and one of the men he had been with the night before. And, to his credit, he felt a deeper interest in the search.

"Now, we know you'll be put to some expense, and I propose to allow you fifteen dollars a week, until you either find her, or give up the search, and my original proposition as to the forty dollars as soon as you locate her holds good. Now, what do you say?"

"I think that's all right, and I'll find her if she remains in the city. Probably I may have to go over to the north and south side districts and maybe to South Chicago—the Strand, as they call it there, is one of the worst."

"What we want you to do then as soon as you locate her is to go to the nearest telegraph office and send this dispatch. I will write you a couple now," pulling the blanks from his pocket and writing:

"Matthew Howard,

B——, Michigan.

We have a surplus of blankets which we are anxious to dispose of that will suit your trade. Come, inspect, and make an offer.

JONES & CO.,
—— Market St., Chicago."

"As soon as we receive your message we'll come by the next train and meet you here."

"That's simple enough," remarked Tony, recognizing Howard's practical methods.

"I will also leave you some envelopes already directed to me, marked *Personal*, in which you can occasionally let us know of your progress. I wonder if they have any envelopes here."

"I can get some across the street," remarked Tony.

"Then go get some for me," said Howard, "and also some stamps if they have any. Here's a quarter."

Tony went, and soon returned with both stamps and envelopes.

Howard directed and stamped them, writing *Personal* on each in a large round hand. "That will do now," handing them to Tony and telling him to put them in his pocket. "You understand now?" addressing their agent.

"Perfectly."

"Well, here's your fifteen dollars, to begin with, and this day week, if you don't telegraph to us in the meantime, you will find a letter here waiting for you with fifteen dollars enclosed."

Howard, looking at Hill, asked, "Is there anything else you can think of, Bob?"

"No, I think that covers the ground."

"Well, then we'll have something to drink. What will you take, Tony?"

"I always drink beer."

"Then get us a bottle." The regular waiter of the establishment not coming on duty until night, Howard gave him the money for the beer, which Tony soon produced, with the glasses.

"Here's wishing you success!" said Howard, as he took his glass in his hand.

"Thank you," said Tony. "I'll find her if she's in Chicago."

"I would like to see Kate before I go," remarked Howard.

"I don't believe she's up yet, but I'll find out."

Tony, on returning, said she'd be down in a few minutes. On her arriving, Howard thanked her for the assistance she had given them. "We find Tony all right," he remarked. "He did his best, and I have secured his further service, as we are going home today."

"Well, boys, when you come to town don't forget to call, and if I hear anything I'll let you know when you come."

"We'll see you again, but should you find anything in reference to her, you tell Tony. He's got our address. What will you take before we leave you?"

"It is too early for me to take anything. I'll wait till you call again."

"Then we'll be going, but, Miss Kanter, if you can find out anything, you'll find that we'll appreciate it. So good-bye!" They shook hands and parted, Howard and Hill to go to the hotel, settle their bill, and take the next train to B——, both sadly disappointed.

A week elapsed, and Howard received a letter from Tony. It read:

"Have searched nearly every house on the west side, and could not find a trace of her. Am going to South Chicago tomorrow. Received the fifteen dollars you sent me, for which accept thanks. Will write again in a couple of days.

Yours truly, Tony."

Two days after, Howard received another letter: "Made a thorough search of every crib in the South Chicago regulated district. Had to buy beer like a drunken sailor. The Judys thought I was a customer pining for some of them. Its a cheap place anyhow; only costing a quarter a throw for the beer. No one there ever heard of her and, as I located every recruit they had got within the past month, I feel sure she's not there. Will try the south side for a couple of nights.—Tony."

On Howard receiving the South Chicago letter he wrote Tony, telling him to persevere, and inclosed a ten-dollar bill for expenses, with further instructions not to be shy on funds, but find the girl if possible..

On the third day after receiving the South Chicago letter, Howard received another:

"Mr. Howard.

Dear Sir:—I am sorry to have to say that I made a thorough search of the south side as far as I could, without any success. I begin to believe she must have left the city. During my tour through the south side I found some who knew her, but none could give me any information as to her present whereabouts. Those who knew her said she used to work in a swell joint here, but that she was fired about a year ago. Will try the north side tonight and tomorrow, and then write you for instructions. Tony."

Howard saw by the tenor of Tony's letter he was somewhat disheartened, so he wrote him a letter of encouragement, inclosing fifteen dollars, and then awaited anxiously his reply. Hill and Howard met daily, and discussed the tenor of Tony's letters. Hill had little to say. He was stolid in his manner since the first tidings of Martha, his usually sociable disposition had left him, and he read Tony's

letters with little show of disappointment. Not so with Matthew Howard, who watched the mail man's arrival with interest and anxiety. On the arrival of a letter marked "*Personal*," which he recognized as being from his agent in Chicago, he immediately opened it in advance of his extensive correspondence. After reading, he stuffed it in his pocket, to be answered if necessary at the earliest opportunity. The promised letter describing Tony's search on the north side he waited for with impatience. It arrived on a Monday morning. He sorted his mail in his private office, and when he came across it he ran his opener beneath the flaps of the envelope, his hand trembling as he opened it and having little hope of hearing of the lost one. It read:

"Mr. Howard.

Dear Sir:—I am afraid the jig is up. I looked through a number of places on the north side, but could learn nothing about her. There are numerous assignation houses and roomers in that section, but, of course, I could not get access to them, so I confined my efforts to the saloons which abound in the district, and interviewed the women, none of whom had ever heard of her. I feel now that I have done the best I could, and don't feel warranted in going any farther without instructions. My own opinion is that she's not in Chicago, a conclusion Kate has also reached. As she says, Clem and she were pretty good friends and, if she was in the city she would surely call on her. Hoping to hear from you by return mail, etc.

Yours truly, Tony."

Howard placed the letter in his pocket just as Rachel, his sister, peered into his private office and said:

"Matt, are you not coming to any breakfast this morning? Everything will be cold."

"Yes, Sis, I'm coming." Rising from his seat, he followed her into the dining room.

The morning papers lay on the table close by his plate, and like many business men he invariably read them at his meals. Picking up a Chicago paper, on the front page he noticed an item of which the head line attracted his attention. The caption was:

A FLOATER

"The body of a young woman, apparently about the age of 23, was found in the Chicago river on Friday morning, and the remains were taken to the county morgue. There is no indication that she met a violent death, as no marks were found on her person except a slight abrasion on her forehead, which was caused probably by contact with the abutment of the bridge near which she was found. She had on a print dress, very short in the skirt for a woman of her years, a flannel petticoat, undershirt, no drawers, and low shoes. There were no marks on any of her clothing which would lead to her identity. If a suicide, it could not be a case of destitution, as, on opening her dress, a twenty-dollar bill was found next her skin."

Matthew Howard turned deathly pale as he laid down the paper. His sister Rachel, in alarm, said, "What is it, Matt, what is to do with you? You're sick!"

"Yes, Rachel, I will have to lie down for a while."

Picking up the paper he retired to his room, where he wept bitterly. "My poor Martha! My love, I feel you are no more!"

His sister knocked at the door, but he refused her admittance. She heard him sobbing.

"Let me in, Matt!" she said.

"No, let me alone."

"Shall I send for the doctor?"

"No, let me rest."

Alarmed, she went to the phone and calling up Robert Hill, said, "Bob, call in at noon. I am afraid there's something wrong with Matt."

CHAPTER XXIX.

CLAIMED.

The noon-hour whistle at the mill had not ceased its shrill notes, when Robert Hill set out to find what the trouble was with his friend Howard. He had a presentiment that it was news from Chicago in reference to his sister, and felt that it was unsatisfactory, from the tone of Rachel Howard's call for him to come during the noon hour. He, however, had steeled his mind for the worst.

On nearing the store he observed Rachel at the door looking in the direction she knew he would come.

"What's up?" inquired Hill, as soon as he got within speaking distance.

"Matthew is very sick," was her reply, "and he won't let me send for the doctor."

"Where is he, up in his room?"

"Yes."

Without further delay he climbed the stairs and, without knocking, pushed the door open, and saw Howard reclining on a couch in apparent distress—a newspaper beside him.

"What's the trouble now? Bad news, I know!"

Howard handed him the paper, pointing to the paragraph which had the announcement of his sister's death. He read it, every word, and then, looking at Howard, Hill said, "'Tis well."

He sat down for a moment, and then, addressing his friend, exclaimed, "I will go to Chicago by the next train."

"It is terrible!" was all Matt could say.

"I would rather have her dead than an inmate of one of those horrible institutions we visited the other night; so brace up, as I will want you to go with me."

"I will be ready."

"Then I'll go back to the mill and make arrangements so that I can be relieved for a few days. I'll call for you before train time." With that he took his leave.

Howard was surprised at the indifference Bob Hill displayed, his impression being that he would break out in paroxysms of passion. Howard's chief cause for anxiety was that he had not played his part well, in not promising Martha that he would keep her secret inviolate, then notify her brother as to the true conditions, and go and secure her. He said to himself, if a deception was ever permissible it was in her case, and much as he tried to justify his conduct while in her company, still he could not but reproach himself. That she had committed suicide he had no doubt, and he felt he was in part responsible. So it was with a heavy heart he accompanied his friend to the train to assist in seeing to the remains of one in death that he had admired so much in life, with all the ardor of a lover in his young manhood, and with the keenest commiseration and sympathy in the hour of her misfortune.

While on the train the two friends discussed ways and means to explain their identification of her. This was one of the problems, and another was, how to shield her name and explain her long absence.

"I suppose you intend to bring her remains home?" inquired Howard.

"I assuredly do," said Hill.

"Well, then we'll have to find a reason for her absence, and I am going to save her reputation at all hazards. But

the first thing we'll have to do when we reach the city is to go to the morgue, as I don't believe they keep unclaimed bodies there any length of time."

On arriving at the morgue, the man in charge was informed that they expected to identify the remains of a woman who had been found in the river.

"That's her over there," replied the man, pointing to a receptacle with a glass cover, through which the face of the dead could be seen. The other portions of the body were covered by a white sheet.

Both men recognized the corpse at the first glance, Howard bursting into tears and turning away from the sight. Hill looked stolidly, his teeth firmly clenched, his brows knit. "I suppose they have held an inquest?" he inquired of the morgue keeper.

"Yes, sir, it was an open verdict—death by drowning—but there was no evidence as to how she got into the river."

"Is there any presumption that she met with violence?"

"No, none at all; it's a clear case. Hood, in his song of the Shirt, amply explains it in the lines:

'One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death.' "

"Has anyone been here that recognized her?"

"No, sir, there has been quite a number of people who looked at her, but not one who ever remembered seeing her before."

"Well, we know her, and have come to claim the body."

"Then you'll have to see the warden, or the house physician, if the warden isn't in."

"Come, Howard," said Hill, "brace up. We have no time to lose. Where is the physician to be found?"

"The office is on the second floor."

"Then we'll go and see him right away."

As they went toward the stairs leading to the house physician's office, Hill remonstrated with Howard. "You'll have to brace up, Matt. We've a lot to do."

"I can't help it, Bob!"

"Well you'll have to help it, Matt. You're a business man, and I'll want your help."

"I'll be all right in a little while."

On entering the office of the house physician, that gentleman treated them very courteously.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" he asked.

Howard, having regained his composure, advanced in front of Hill.

"Doctor, do you remember some months ago having a patient here by the name of Clementina Montague?"

"My dear sir, we have so many patients here that it is hard for me to remember the names of any except those of special cases. But what was she suffering from?"

"I believe it was a venereal trouble."

"Then she must have been in the lock ward."

"Yes, I thought you might remember her by the singularity of her name."

"Well, I have a faint recollection of treating a woman by a name something similar to that, but you see those girls that are brought here from the sporting houses have assumed names of a very uncommon character, some with the object of disguising their identity, and others adopting names that will sound either more euphonious or aristocratic than those of their fathers or husbands. How long is it since she was here? Of course, we can trace her."

"It's probably between five and six months."

"Then I'll have Miss Murphy down—she's the head nurse in that ward, and perhaps she can give you some information. I may say, however, when they once leave here we lose all track of them, unless they take sick again and have to come back."

Reaching for his telephone and receiving a reply, he said, "Give me Ward No. —." After a few seconds he said, "Is Miss Murphy there?" "Yes." "Please tell her I would like to see her in my office." He hung up the receiver. "She'll be down in a few minutes."

"Doctor, I suppose cases like Miss Montague's are very numerous in a city like Chicago?" remarked Howard, while they were waiting for the nurse.

"Yes, far more numerous than the general public contemplates, and they are the forerunners of numerous complaints, in the fact that those suffering from the contagion have their vitality sapped, which makes them susceptible to many diseases, especially such as rheumatism, tuberculosis, locomotor ataxia and other ills too numerous to mention—but here's Miss Murphy."

"Miss Murphy," said the physician, addressing her, "those two gentlemen are here inquiring about a patient of yours that was here five or six months ago by the name of —" looking over at Howard to fill in the name.

"Clementina Montague," said Howard.

"Yes, I remember her," replied the nurse. "Don't you know, doctor, the woman who had the brain fever and you had so much trouble to pull through?"

"Oh, yes, I do remember her now. I also remember the warden and I went to some trouble to find where she belonged, but, I believe, nurse, we failed, didn't we?"

"Yes, I often tried to listen during her ravings to see

if I could glean any information as to where she came from, but not a word—she was so incoherent. She frequently called upon some person by the name of Bob and a Matt Howard to come and save her.” Howard hastily left the room, sobbing bitterly.

Hill blinked his eyes, knit his brows, and firmly closed his teeth, so as to suppress his feelings.

Both doctor and nurse looked inquiringly at Hill.

“Probably you knew her?” said the doctor, after a lapse of a few seconds.

“Yes, we knew her well. She was lost to us for years, but at length we have found her.”

“I am glad of that,” said the nurse, “as she was a lovable character and an excellent patient. She told me before she left that she’d die before she’d go back to the life she’d been leading.”

“Where is she now?” inquired the doctor.

“In the morgue,” was Hill’s answer.

“Too bad! Too bad!” as the doctor looked at the nurse.

“I must go see her,” said the nurse, “I am sure I can tell if it’s she.”

Howard returned to the room, anxious to bring their interview to an end. “We’ve come to claim the body,” was his first remark.

“Well, I feel confident you’re the proper parties, and if there is no other claimant she will be at your disposal. Nurse, you said you were going down to see her?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then let me know if any other party has identified the remains, and report.”

“Before we leave, doctor, we want to thank you for your courtesy, and probably you could recommend us to a

good undertaker, who would take care of the body and furnish a casket, as we have to take her out of the city."

"Well, there's C. B.— close by. I can safely recommend him."

"Thank you, doctor. Now I would like to ask you a question that I feel confident you can answer."

"Maybe not," said the doctor, smiling, "but if I can I will."

"Well, it is this: Did you ever know of cases where persons come to a strange city and lose their identity, or did not remember whence they came?"

The doctor picked up a piece of perfectly blank paper from his desk, and, looking at Howard, said, "In my limited experience I have known cases to which you refer where minds were as void as that, and some of them never recovered their reason—and had to be placed in institutions. Others proved useful in many industrial pursuits, but knowledge of their early being never came back to them. Of course, those are isolated cases. By the by, I must know your name."

"I am the Matthew Howard she often raved about."

"I am pleased to meet you, Mr. Howard, and hope to meet you again under more agreeable circumstances. Now, Miss Murphy, you go down with those gentlemen and see if you can recognize Miss Montague's remains."

At the first glance Miss Murphy said, "That's she. I would know her among thousands. You see I had her under my care for about four months."

"During that time, I am sure, Miss Murphy," said Howard addressing her, "you treated her considerately."

"Yes, I took kindly to her. I thought she was very different from the class of women we receive from such places."

"Then, Miss Murphy, I would like you to do me a favor. I want you to buy a pair of gloves or some article that you can use." He took hold of her hand, and placed a five-dollar bill in it. She protested that that wasn't necessary, but Howard persisted.

"Well, I'll tell you what you'll do now. You go over to the undertaker's and make what arrangements you desire, and tell him to call for the body. I will have the doctor make out the necessary certificate."

Both Hill and Howard shook hands with the kindly little woman, and sought out the undertaker, from whose catalogue they selected a very superior casket.

"I will have her properly laid out in my mortuary chapel tomorrow morning, subject to your instructions."

After leaving the undertaker's, Howard said, "Now, Bob, we'll go over to Kanter's and find out if they have heard of Martha's death; if they haven't, we'll see Tony, pay him a little money I owe him, and tell him to give up the search for her, as we have changed our minds on the matter."

On their meeting Tony at the house of Kate Kanter, he was emphatic in his declaration that Clem Montague had left the city.

"I have done my best," he said, "and I don't think there is any use of looking farther. If I should happen to hear anything about her I can telegraph to you."

"We are well satisfied with you, Tony, as we believe you have worked faithfully, and that there is no use looking farther for the present; so here's the balance of the money we owe you, and we hope you're satisfied."

"Perfectly. I am only sorry I could not have won that other forty. If I had found her we would have brought her out of the house she was in if I had to use my gun"—

putting his hand in his hip pocket and pulling out a very effective looking weapon.

"It can't be helped," remarked Hill, "so there is nothing left but to bid you and Kate good-bye. Where is she?"

"I will bring her."

On Kate's arrival, she deplored the fact of their not finding her.

"She's not in the city, in my opinion; but if she is, and we can locate her, you will hear from us."

Both Hill and Howard thanked her for the interest she had displayed and left.

That night at the hotel the two men discussed the problem as to how best break the news of her being found to the people at B——, and especially to her parents.

"I'll tell you my idea," said Howard. "We should invoke the aid of Mr. Peterson, the pastor. He was deeply interested in her as one of his choir, and is a constant visitor at your house. We might write him a letter, telling him of our miraculous discovery, and ask him to break the news to your father and mother in as gentle a manner as he possibly can. Of course, the news will give them a great shock, but there will be some consolation in knowing they can at least have her remains. I can tell a white lie without any scruples, that my distress at the breakfast table was the result of hearing of her death in the hospital. You and I, Bob, are too well known in town for any one to question our word, and if there are any explanations to be made you leave that to me. You know nothing about it."

"I think that's the best thing to do," agreed Hill.

"You see, Bob, they will have the news a day or so in advance of our arrival. It will be the talk of the town, and the neighboring country. The subject will be thoroughly discussed in advance of our arrival with the

body. Many conjectures will be made, but the sympathy every one in the district will have for your parents will, in a measure, silence the gossippers, and when they come to see me, as assuredly they will, I'll tell them a story that there will be trouble to refute."

"Well, start in and write your letter, Matt. I would like to get it away as soon as possible."

Matt immediately started to frame his letter, and wrote as follows:

"Reverend Thomas Peterson.

Dear Sir:—I feel that in writing you this letter you will receive both a great surprise and a shock, but to you, above all others, myself and Mr. Robert Hill will have to appeal for aid in this very sad affair. We are all members of your church, and it's part of your mission to offer your sympathy and advice to those in distress, and, knowing you as we do, feel that you will cheerfully take up the task.

You, of course, remember Martha Hill, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hill, whose departure from our midst some years ago caused such deep grief to all who knew her, and to know her was to love her. Well, as you are aware, when she left us to come to this city, for many months we anxiously awaited tidings of her, but none came, until we ultimately gave up all hope and believed her dead. No other reason could be assigned for her long silence, as she was of an affectionate disposition, and sincerely devoted to her family and friends. You may judge my surprise and consternation when I received information that a person lying in one of the hospitals in this city had a memorandum on her person with my name and address. On receiving the notice I had an unaccountable desire to investigate who it was, and, strange as it may seem to you, I had a presenti-

ment, which I tried hard to banish from my mind, that it might have some reference to our dearly beloved friend. The news so preyed upon me that I took sick at the very thought, and conceived an irresistible desire to investigate. So I induced Bob Hill to come with me. When we reached the hospital, judge our consternation to find the remains of our lost friend. She had died the day before. On our arrival with the body I will give further explanation. In the meantime, in advance of our coming, we want you to break the sad news to her parents, and offer them such consolation and comfort in their hour of tribulation, as we know you can.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

Robert Hill, and
Matthew Howard."

Hill heartily approved the letter, which was duly mailed.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOME AT LAST.

Early the following morning, Hill and Howard set out for the undertaker's to view the body. Both men gazed long and pensively at the remains. The undertaker stood by to hear their approval of his work, and to receive further instructions.

"You have surely done your work well," remarked Hill.

"We always try to do our best," said the party spoken to. "You see she was somewhat discolored and the face partly bloated—she must have been dead some days."

"Probably so," remarked her brother, "still I must say under the circumstances you have done well. I like the robe very much, and the way she is laid out. The casket is also very fine."

"Well, your friend," turning to Howard, "gave me carte blanche to spare no expense. Still I think you will find my bill reasonable. There is a matter, however, that I think should be attended to before we close up the coffin, and that is, we need some emblem of her faith. If you let me know what religion she professed I will furnish it."

Hill, who up to this time had acted as spokesman, remained silent, his reason being, that, since learning the facts of his sister's betrayal and persecution, he had become somewhat of an agnostic.

Howard, noticing his silence, answered the undertaker's inquiry.

"She was a member of The Reformed Evangelical Church."

"Then I will try to secure something appropriate."

"You can come into the office," remarked Howard, "and I will pay you your account."

The bill having been settled and deemed satisfactory, Hill gave the undertaker instructions to have the coffin properly boxed up and at the depot at 12 o'clock sharp.

Few, if any, of this particular faith, C. B——, the undertaker, had ever occasion to bury, and, failing to find anything distinctively identified with her church, furnished instead a neat edition of the book of Common Prayer, believing that the Reformed Evangelical Church was but a branch of the numerous Protestant organizations.

The Rev. Mr. Peterson, with a sorrowing heart, broke the news as gently as he could to the bereaved parents of the long lost girl. The old couple were prostrated by the recital. All three sat in silence for a time, the reverend gentleman being too much oppressed himself to offer the consolation he intended. When the old couple regained somewhat their composure, he would extend condolence. Hill senior began to ply him with questions as to where she had been, who found her, why did she not write, or come home; to all of which his answer was, "We'll not know much until Robert and Matt come back, and then they will explain all. I believe, however, God has been good in restoring her body to us. We will at least know where she rests in peace."

The old proverb that "Ill news travels fast" was verified in the case of Martha Hill. Before an hour had passed people stood in groups discussing the news.

"Martha's been found!" was the utterance proclaimed from mouth to mouth. The children in the schools who lived

some distance from the center ran home with haste to inform their parents. To every person they met on the way they shouted, "They've found Martha! or, "They've got Martha!" Some added, "She'll be home today!" while others gave different versions to those they met, which had to be brief, as they were in great haste to inform their parents of the startling news.

The men at the mill, on receiving the first news of her being found, were not informed of her death, and rejoiced for Bob's sake, but when later informed of her being dead a corresponding depression permeated the entire works.

"Too bad! Too bad!" was a frequent exclamation. "I am sorry for Bob."

"How he loved that girl and grieved over her loss!" said the manager of the mill to a group who had congregated in the office. Just then a messenger boy arrived with a telegram. It was brief:

"Mr. ———.

Union Mills,
B——, Michigan.

Will arrive in B—— by the train due at 3:30 p. m.

Robert Hill."

"Then we'll close down at 3 o'clock," said the manager to those present. "Notify the assistant engineer, and tell those in your different departments."

Long before train time, the people stood around in groups. Many were the suggestions advanced for her long absence, all vague and far from the truth. None, however, doubted her virtue. They only knew her as the fond daughter, the good, sociable, religious girl, the general conclusion being that she must have met some accident that prevented her from communicating with her friends. "Perhaps," con-

jectured one, "she has been in some institution all the time." All, however, waited in suspense to hear the facts in the case after the arrival of her brother and sweetheart, as they knew Matt Howard was.

The manager of the mill had selected six of his men to aid in carrying the body, notifying them to rush home and dress up.

The question of where the remains should find a temporary resting place was discussed by him and the Rev. Mr. Peterson, both of whom interviewed the old couple as to where they desired her to be placed.

"What do you think for the best?" inquired Mr. Hill of the manager of the mill.

"This cottage of yours is very small," was his answer.

"I want her to be brought right home," said the mother, between her sobs.

The manager of the mill looked at his reverence, who was mute on the subject.

"I would like to make a suggestion," said the mill man, "if agreeable. The whole countryside is interested in at least getting a look at her, the depot is crowded already, and if you bring her remains here there will be a jam and a number of people will be disappointed. What I would suggest is, that she be placed in the chancel of the church, and all those who wish to view the remains will get an opportunity."

"I think that's the best," said Hill senior, looking at his wife, who offered no objection, and it was agreed.

When the train hove in sight, the town marshal and his aids had great difficulty in keeping the people assembled clear of the danger line. The youngsters were extra troublesome, having to be driven from the track repeatedly. Preference was shown to the women and girls who had assembled,

many of them having been brought up together, attending the same school and church. The manager of the mill, who had assumed the responsibility of conducting the remains to the church, was surrounded by his six assistants.

Howard was the first to leave the train, followed by Hill. Without a word they went to the rear where the baggage coach was situated, the manager of the mill and his assistants following behind in respectful silence. The railway men were already unloading the box containing the casket.

The manager of the mill had a conversation with Robert and Howard in reference to where the remains should be taken, Hill glancing at the crowd which was pressing around on every side, and recognizing the practicability of the plan suggested.

The engineer began to toll his bell for the crowd to stand clear so that the train might speed on its way; the railway porters at the little depot had trouble to keep the course of the train clear, as the crowd in its eagerness to see what was going on were too close to the danger line. This was particularly true of the urchins, some of whom had taken possession of the steps of the passenger coaches as a point of vantage. At length the course was clear, and the train went on its way, the engineer ringing his bell as if in solemn tones far longer than usual. Even after the train was out of sight the dismal tones of the bell could be heard, as if it were a funeral dirge.

Finally six stalwart men raised the box on their shoulders, and the march to church began. The Rev. Mr. Peterson led the procession. By his side was the manager. Then followed Hill and Howard. Behind them the men carrying the box containing the casket came, and then the long line of friends and citizens, the men with heads un-

covered and the women and girls, many with their handkerchiefs to their eyes, sobbing bitterly. Howard had hard work to suppress his feelings. Not so Robert Hill, who marched head erect, his lips firmly set, looking neither to the right nor left, but manifestly a man who had a resolve on his mind that nothing could dislodge. And so he had.

On the cortege arriving at the church the edifice was more than half filled in advance. Mr. and Mrs. Hill sat in the front pew, with a number of the old neighbors in close proximity. As the head of the procession entered, the people assembled all rose, and mourning and sobbing were painfully distinct. On the bearers of the box reaching the little altar they laid the box on the trestle already placed there for the purpose.

The church was soon filled to its utmost capacity. The usher of the church furnished a screw driver so as to remove the casket from the box, an operation the manager of the mill undertook. The box being opened, the casket was substituted in its place, when all those present gazed on it with commiseration. The sliding window which was placed so as to permit a view of the face and bust having been opened, Rev. Mr. Peterson stood on the little platform in front of the altar and at the head of the casket, and said, "Let us pray." After the prayer he continued: "The funeral arrangements of our dearly beloved sister will be announced in the near future. In the meantime it has been decided by the family of the deceased that the remains shall repose here, so that all who knew her, and to know her was to love her, may have an opportunity to view the body. I would respectfully request, however, that the bereaved family, commencing with her parents, be the first, as they have had no opportunity as yet to gaze upon the dearly beloved departed since the arrival of her remains in

town." The entire audience, except those known to be of immediate relationship, kept their seats. The scenes that followed were heartrending. Robert Hill had to support his aged mother as she gazed through her tears upon the girl,—ever good, and in whom all had great hopes. The manager of the mill placed his arm under that of the father, who showed symptoms of collapse. After a few moments, the old couple were led to the exit of the church. Then followed the immediate relatives, all in deep distress. The crowd stood in awe as they saw Matt Howard leading his sister Rachel by the arm. At the first sight of the remains she went into hysterics—her heart had failed and she had to be carried from the church. Then followed the younger members of the Howard family, known by all assembled to be the closest and oldest friends of the bereaved. At length the neighbors who were all friends formed in procession around the casket and retired from the church, so as to give those still waiting the coveted opportunity of seeing the long lost girl whom many present knew from childhood.

When Robert Hill and the manager of the mill had conducted Mr. and Mrs. Hill home, both the old people were too grief stricken to ask any questions.

"Mother," said Robert, "I will have to leave you for a little while. I must go over and see Matt. We have a good deal to do yet." He kissed his mother, who placed her arms around his neck, and, then turning to the manager of the mill, who remained aside, Hill said, "Mr. Robinson, I am deeply indebted to you for your kindness."

"Don't mention it, Bob. I am heartily sorry for the distress of you and your family, and anything I can do for you just let me know—I am at your service." He then took his leave, after taking the hand of both Mr. and Mrs. Hill, his looks betraying his grief.

The family doctor of the Howards had followed Rachel and her brother to their home, feeling he would have to give some attention to the girl. On Hill's arrival, he found Matt in his room, the store having been closed on the news arriving of Martha's discovery and death.

"Matt, I have come to see what arrangements we will have to make for Martha's burial."

"Well, Bob, the sooner the better. Your family have had no occasion to secure a burial lot. I should like you to get one as near ours as possible and, if you cannot do that, as we have a large tract, I would like you to accept a portion of ours."

"I'll see," said Hill, "but where is Rachel? I would like to consult her."

"She's in her room. The doctor is attending to her, but he says she will be all right when she gets a good cry over. So we will have to let her alone."

"Then there is another matter I want to talk to you about. Since you discovered my sister you have been to a good deal of expense and I want to know how much it has been so that I can pay you."

"Robert," looking at him, "you know I would do a lot for you or your family, but there's one thing I will not do, and that is, let you know what it has cost me, and I will tell you my reason. I blame myself, in a great measure, for Martha's misfortune. The day she left, before she placed her foot on the step, I should have taken her in my arms and said, 'I refuse to let you go,' and held her in my grasp till the train went by. She was then the whole world to me, but I had to let her have her own way, confident we would soon have her back."

"None of us could have had any other thought, Matt. So I don't believe you should reproach yourself."

"Yes, but I do. Another blunder I hold myself responsible for is that when I found her in Kanter's, I should have gone and sworn out a warrant for her under some pretext, and have had her arrested, or lied to her that I would never give her away, that I would keep her secret until we had time, you and I, to get her, but I could not do that, as my mind was bent on providing for her after we had rescued her, as I felt confident we would, and now I feel all is lost, and when we bury her my heart will be in the same grave." With that he burst into tears. "Robert, she sang her swan song to me that night—I forgot to mention it to you."

"Matt, don't blame yourself for anything. I, her brother, cannot see that you were a particle to blame, and what has happened could not have been foreseen. I don't think, however, you should be permitted to bear so much expense. You know I can pay you."

"Now, Bob," impatiently rejoined Matt, "drop that subject; and, if you want to remain my friend, never mention it again. Let us talk about laying her at rest."

"Well what do you suggest?"

"That you consult your parents as to the burial lot, and tell them at the same time that I own more space than ever we'll require, and that I would like to share it with them so that we can take care of the plot where all we love may lie together."

"When do you think the funeral should take place, Matt?"

"Tomorrow. There's no time to lose. She's now been dead a long time, and will probably fail rapidly. So make arrangements for two o'clock tomorrow. The mill, I understand, is going to close."

The funeral of Martha Hill was an imposing event.

The respect all had for the bereaved family and the painful circumstances of her mysterious disappearance and unaccountable absence aroused the sympathy of all the country round. People flocked to the church, where the customary services for the dead were observed. Those who had gardens depleted their stock to bury her casket in flowers.

The graveyard being a mile from the church, six stalwart men employees of the mill, fellow-workmen of her brother, were assigned to carry the casket. Eight girls, former members of the choir, dressed in white, acted as pall-bearers and walked beside the coffin. The sorrowing friends, led by the aged parents, then Robert Hill and one of his sisters, followed by the younger members of the family, then Matthew Howard and his sister Rachel, dressed in deep black. Immediately behind them the friends and neighbors, men and their wives in pairs. Then came the men from the mill, each bearing on his breast a badge with the inscription,

IN MEMORIAM

For

MARTHA HILL

Whose Loss We All Mourn.

Then followed a promiscuous crowd of men and women, boys and girls. At the end of the procession came a hayrack loaded with flowers. The services at the grave were brief; tears were shed and sobs heard. Matthew Howard being in great distress, the hearts of his neighbors went out to him, as nearly all knew the terrible loss he had sustained.

Robert Hill stood immutable as a rock. He had no tears to shed, he looked beyond the grave, he had an obligation to fill, a duty to perform. The last rites concluded, the gravediggers grasped their shovels, and filled the grave, in which lay the mortal remains of MARTHA HILL.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN EXPLANATION.

The night of the day on which the funeral of Martha Hill took place, Howard and her brother had a conference as to how to explain their knowledge of her whereabouts at the time of her death, and also as to what information they had as to where she was during her absence of four years and her reason for not communicating with them.

“You leave it to me, Robert. You know I have already mentioned to you about my getting a communication informing me of a sick woman having a memorandum on her person with my name and address, and the effect such information had on me. That’s a fairly plausible story, and there is none likely to question it, especially those who know of the bond of sympathy and love that existed between us. As to her doings during her long absence, that is a blank which I intend to account for in this way: immediately after her arrival in Chicago she either met an accident that destroyed her mentality, or it was one of those cases, of which there are many, where persons through some great grief or unaccountable cause lose their memory and forget both their name or the place they came from. You remember the question I put to the doctor in reference to that subject and the answer he gave me. As to her being brought to the hospital, I intend to inform those who seek information that she was brought there by the members of a very poor family who, some weeks before, had taken her in for charity sake, believing her to be some harmless imbecile,

homeless and friendless, and that during the time she was with them, though cleanly and industrious, her mind was a blank as to her real name or former place of abode."

"It pains me much, Matthew, for you to have to tell such a story about my sister, but we cannot tell the truth. It would kill my father and mother, and would be a scandal of such proportions that I am afraid we would all have to leave B——. The question of her persecution would never offset the facts in the minds of the people here — they wouldn't believe such things possible."

"You never mind, Robert. You leave it to me. The men around the mill, realizing your distress, are not likely to pester you with questions, and, ere this time to-morrow night, I will have satisfied the curiosity of many people, who in turn will tell the story to others, and put such interpretation on it as their minds will suggest, none of which will have the remotest semblance of the facts in the case. The first to whom I will have to explain matters will be your father and mother, who, I know, are the most anxious to hear from me. I will be over first thing in the morning. You can tell them tonight of my coming so go home and rest."

"Yes, I need to. I am fairly worn out, and intend to report for work in the morning."

Matthew Howard arrived at the Hill cottage early on the morning after the funeral, and told a concise and plausible story to the old people, who listened with breathless interest.

"My poor child!" was all the mother could exclaim, while tears ran down the father's cheeks. The Rev. Mr. Peterson came in during the recital, and innocently substantiated Howard's narrative, by saying he had read of

cases of a similar character where persons had forgotten their identity.

During the day Matthew Howard had many inquirers, to all of whom he told a story similar to that he had told Martha's parents. None there were who doubted his word. Why should they? What possible reason could he have to deceive her relatives and friends? He was a man of character and probity, whom to know was to respect. Ere twenty-four hours had passed the whole community was enlightened as to the facts as far as they could be learned. And as the whole people of the city and surrounding country respected both the families of the Hills and Howards as old and respected citizens of the community, and as there was no villain in the plot to create suspicion as to the veracity of Matt Howard's statement, it was unanimously accepted as the truth, and as the old proverb says: "Ere nine days were over it ceased to be a wonder."

Hill took his place in the mill the next morning. His mates, knowing his distress, never broached the subject. They knew, or thought they knew, that he had little information to disclose, so refrained from talking over a subject that all knew must be painful to him. At the conclusion of the day's work, when the men got home Matt Howard's story was there in advance of them. If married men, their wives or daughters awaited impatiently their coming to inquire from them if they had any further particulars and to unburden themselves of the gossip they had heard during the day and to tell the Howard version of the sad and mysterious affair. So that ever after Robert Hill was spared the trouble of explaining anything that he might know of the distressing circumstances.

Robert Hill tried to comfort his parents as best he could. He spoke freely of finding their daughter, his sister.

"We should be thankful, mother, we know where she is. All doubt has now ceased. We believed her dead, and so she was in thought, now we know in fact, so why mourn?"

At the mill he attended his work, but the geniality of his disposition, so well known, seemed to have left him. He had little to say to any of them, only such as was necessary in their daily intercourse. From the mill to his home, and from his home to the mill, was his daily route. He seldom spoke to any one he met on the way. He invariably walked with his head down, as a man would who had something serious on his mind. He failed in his attendance at church and was admonished by the pastor, to whom he gave a respectful but unsatisfactory reason for his absence. At length he shunned the Howard family, to the great discomfiture of Rachel Howard, who inquired of her brother.

"What's to do with Mr. Hill; he never comes around now?"

"I don't know," was her brother's answer, "unless he wishes to give his whole time and attention to his parents."

"He don't even go to church," she said. "I haven't seen him for weeks."

"I can't understand," said Matt, "but I am going over this evening to see him."

On Matthew Howard's arrival at the home of his friend's parents, after the customary salutation, he inquired for Bob. "He's in the workshop," replied his mother. Howard went to the little carpenter's shop where Hill senior had arranged to do jobs at home before his illness. Howard entered unheard or unannounced. He noticed Hill adjusting a noose on a piece of sash cord.

"What are you doing, Bob?" was his inquiry.

"Nothing; just passing the time." He placed the piece of sash cord he had been toying with hastily in a drawer.

"What have we done, Bob, to you that you've shaken us entirely? Rachel thinks I am somewhat responsible for you're not coming around."

"Is that so?" he said, smiling. "I must go then and disabuse her mind. The facts are, Matt, I don't go anywhere except to my work and back. I suppose it will wear off in time, but for the present I like to stay at home."

"Now, Bob, the facts are you're becoming melancholy and you know that's a very dangerous malady. A couple of weeks after we brought Martha home it was excusable, but you have no justification in shaking your old friends. I feel that I am nearly as big a sufferer as you, but I have to stand it."

"Yes, Matt, you have done your full duty as well as any friend could be expected to do, but I have mine to do yet." His teeth clenched and there was a look on his countenance that alarmed his friend.

"Come, come, Bob, be reasonable. We cannot bring back the past. Let us renew the old time friendship."

"Did we ever cease to be friends, Matt?"

"No, but come around to the store. Rachel would like to see you, and so would all the rest of my people."

"I will drop in some evening and square myself with them, Matt, but I am in no mind at present to gossip."

Hill kept his word and spent an evening in the Howard store. All present welcomed him. Rachel was particularly pleased to see him enter the now very large establishment.

"Robert," she said, looking into his face. "We were wondering what had become of you. I have been over to your house a number of times, but never could see you. I hope none of us have done anything to offend you?"

"No, Rachel, the old friendship exists as strong as ever, but I have stayed around the house to comfort the old people, and when I have been out I have preferred to be alone. Don't blame me, I can't help it."

There was another considerable lapse before Hill visited the Howards again.

Rachel determined to visit the Hills whenever her time as cashier in her brother's extensive establishment would permit. She had also assumed the function of taking care of Martha's grave, which was in close proximity of that of her father and mother. On the occasion of one of her visits she saw Robert Hill sitting on an adjacent tomb, crying. She went and sat by his side and tried to comfort him. She felt she had a right to. She hoped to fill Martha's place, to be more than sister to him. He looked longingly to her when she was seated by his side.

"It is so good of you, Rachel, to take care of Martha's grave."

"You know, Robert, she was my nearest and dearest friend. We were children together, and girls together, shared one another's confidence and built our hopes in the future, but God willed it otherwise." She wiped her eyes.

At her allusion to God's will, Robert Hill's mind reverted to Ike Rosenthal and Madam Blomgarten.

"I must be going," he said, rising and abruptly walking away.

Rachel looked after him in alarm. Her womanly feeling was discomfited by his abrupt departure, but her love for him, coupled with her Christian charity, could bear him no ill will. She told her brother on her return home of his strange conduct.

"I am very anxious about him," said Matt, "but he's too stubborn to take any advice."

On Matthew Howard going to his bank next day the president, seeing him at the receiver's window, shouted:

"Matt, come in; I want to talk to you!"

When Howard entered the private office, the bank president told him to close the door and take a seat.

"What I wanted to talk to you about was your friend Mr. Hill. I have noticed of late he is very peculiar. I pass him on the street sometimes and he hardly notices me. I chided him on one occasion. He only smiled when I charged him with passing me without even returning my nod. He excused himself by saying he hadn't seen me. Mr. Robinson also has been talking to me about him, not complaining that Bob doesn't attend to business, but he tells me that sometimes he spends hours in the mill putting the machinery in order and fixing things up when he should be at home. He has also added some valuable improvements to the plant. Robinson's anxiety is that he may break down. Of course he knows Bob's trouble, and made a proposition to him the other day to take a month's vacation and draw his month's salary in advance. Hill thanked him, and said he was better at home, and that as he was going to install some improvements in the machinery he had no time.. Robinson told him to let it wait until he came back. But Hill turned the proposition down, the salary suggestion cutting no figure, as Robert has a snug little amount here to his credit."

"I don't see where we can do anything for him," said Howard, "I have talked to him, but to no good. What I fear is that he has a dose of melancholy that he may not get over."

Hill called at the house one evening and he seemed much more cheerful. He even joked with Rachel, to her great surprise. Matt Howard came to where his sister and Hill were talking.

"Matt, I am going to Chicago on Saturday to see a sculptor about a stone to put on our burial lot—or yours, to be more specific."

"That'll do, Bob, about it being mine. That section has already been deeded to your father and mother. I have deposited the deed in the bank, to their credit, so neither you nor I have any more claim to it. But why can't you put off your visit to some day during the week when I could go with you?"

"No, I must go Saturday afternoon, while we are closed down."

"You needn't trouble yourself about whether the mill is closed down Saturday or not. If you go some week day the old mill will be there when you come back."

"Well, Matthew, I have made arrangements to go on Saturday."

"Then if that's the case I will have to excuse you."

When Howard went to his bank the following day the president told him:

"Your friend Hill was here yesterday at noon. He seemed to me to be more sociable. He told me he was going to Chicago to arrange for a monument—I suppose to put over his sister's grave. He drew a thousand dollars, so he must be going to do something handsome."

Hill went to Chicago for a number of consecutive Saturday afternoons, always on the same plea of seeing to the construction and lettering on the projected monument, until the men in the mill jokingly said to him one day, "Bob, we begin to believe you must have a girl in Chicago."

Hill shook his head and said, "No fear."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A TRAGEDY.

Madam Blomgarten's house was fully illuminated one Saturday evening, when a tall, robust man climbed the marble steps leading to the parlor floor. The colored door-keeper, hearing the footsteps ascending, admitted him. On reaching the parlor, he observed a number of young people dancing to the music of a piano, and there were laughter and mirth. Small groups of men and stylishly-dressed women sat at tables drinking. Standing at the parlor door, he seemed either reluctant to enter, or abashed to mingle in company to which he seemed a total stranger. Madam Blomgarten, from her point of vantage, recognizing his dilemma, left her seat, and approaching invited him in.

"You need not feel strange," she said, "I presume you were never here before?"

"No, ma'am."

"Then come in and make yourself at home. Would you like me to introduce you to one of my boarders?"

"I have no objection."

"Then come along." Looking around the fairly-crowded parlor, she caught the eye of a young girl not to exceed the age of 20 years, beckoning to her, who came tripping forward.

"Lucretia, conduct this gentleman to a seat."

Lucretia smiled, and offered her hand to the stranger as a token of good fellowship. She then conducted him to a remote end of the parlor and, providing a chair for his

convenience, with his back to those present, beckoned him to sit down, she taking a seat opposite to him. Noticing either his shyness or awkwardness in such company, she ventured an opinion.

"You seem to be a stranger in these parts?"

"Yes, Miss. I am from the far west, and never was in so swell a ranch as this before," looking around.

"This is one of the best houses in the city and you need have no anxiety. Madam Blomgarten caters only to the best society."

At the mention of the name the man seemed interested.

"Which is she?"

"The lady that introduced us, that stout woman."

"Indeed! She seems a very nice person."

"Yes, she's all business."

The stranger turned and noticed a waiter at his side, standing at attention.

"I suppose it is expected of the gentlemen who come here to treat you girls?"

"Yes, you innocent!" smiling on him.

"Well, you order what you would like."

"They have nothing here but bottled goods—beer and champagne are the ones in general use. Do you think we could afford a bottle of fizz?" looking archly at him.

"Nothing is too good for you, Miss, while you are with me. You order it."

"Tom, bring us a bottle of white seal," addressing the waiter.

The wine was brought and opened, the stranger placing his hand in his breast pocket and extracting a roll of bills of such proportions as to at once to place him high in the estimation of his young lady friend.

Tendering a twenty-dollar bill as payment for the wine, the waiter brought his change. The gentleman took all from the extended tray on which the money was, except fifty cents, at the same time raising the back of his hand to the waiter, signifying that what remained on the tray was for him, another act which elevated him not only in the estimation of Lucretia, but also of the waiter, who thanked him. Both surmised he was "the goods" and well worth warming up to.

The wine glasses having been filled, she raised hers, and, reaching across the table, touched hers to his, smiling.

"So you tell me you're from the far west?" she inquired.

"Yes, Nevada."

"What do you do out there?"

"I am a miner."

"You own a gold mine, I suppose?" smiling.

"Well, there is some gold, and some silver."

"Do you come often to Chicago?"

"No, this is my first visit. You have some city here."

"Yes," laughing, "you had better be careful or you'll get lost." She filled the empty glasses and they both drank.

"I suppose you're a family man?" looking at him, smiling.

"No, I haven't the good fortune."

"Then you have a girl there?"

"Women are very scarce in our parts."

"How would you like to take me with you when you go back?" smiling.

"I would have to consider a project of that magnitude," laughing. "I know how to manage a mine, but how to handle a woman is a proposition in which I have had little experience."

"You would find me very tractable and accommodating. I'm sure I would please you."

"Of that I have no doubt, but we'll have to get better acquainted."

Just then the waiter came and whispered into her ear that she was wanted at the front.

"Who is it?" The waiter gave her a name. "You tell him I am engaged, and that there is no use of him waiting for me."

Turning to her friend of recent acquaintance, she inquired, "You're going to stay all night?"

"Probably so; is this a safe place?"

"You're just as safe here as you would be in your bank, or in your church. Madam Blomgarten's place is well known for its security and respectability. Many of the best people in Chicago come here."

"Indeed! Well let us finish this bottle, and have another."

"I'll go you," laughing.

On the second bottle being brought and drunk, Miss Lucretia became somewhat more kittenish, and moved her seat beside that of the stranger.

"Remember," says she, "I am very jealous, and during your stay in Chicago, whether you take me back to Nevada or not, I will not want you to be fooling with any other girl."

The man laughed. "Lucretia—I believe that's your name—you need have no fear. I begin to believe you're all right."

"I guess you'll find me so," she said, confidently, "but I'm beginning to get stewed."

The second bottle being emptied, the man asked, "Will I order some more wine?"

"No, we'll have a bottle of beer, and then we'll retire." Before the beer was half consumed, Miss Lucretia showed symptoms of inebriation. So rising from her seat, the Nevadian followed her. As they passed Madam Blomgarten, that lady smiled patronizingly on the stranger, of whom she had heard good reports from the waiter. As Lucretia toiled up the first flight of stairs, she remarked on reaching the landing, "We have to go up another flight. I am afraid you'll have to carry me," she said, jokingly.

"Who occupies those rooms?" he said, casually.

"Some of the girls, and that's the madam's room," pointing to one just at the head of the stairs.

"I suppose she has a swell room," he remarked.

"No better than I have," opening the door, while she recovered her breath.

The man from Nevada looked in, observing an old-fashioned four-post bed, a table, chairs, lounge, and what not. This is not very swell," he remarked, viewing the room with a critical eye, and taking in the position of the windows, which he noticed faced the adjoining building. On reaching Lucretia's room, she sat down on the lounge, panting. "You made me drink too much wine," she said.

"Not I," he replied, smiling at her as he sat down beside her, and took her in his arms.

"You mustn't be too gay," she said, laughing up into his face, "and you must treat me right." This allusion was to the financial question, which was agreeably settled.

Next morning, when Lucretia awoke, she found her friend of the night before had already departed.

The following Saturday evening, about 9 o'clock, the gentleman from Nevada peered into the parlor, where the guests were not too numerous. At that hour Lucretia, noticing his entrance, walked ahead of him to the rear of the

parlor, and stood at the table until he came and took a seat. She gave him one of her most bewitching smiles.

"I have a crow to pick with you!" she said. "Why did you give me the slip Sunday morning last, without bidding me good morning? You weren't vexed at me, were you?"

"No, girl, but why should I disturb you? You were sleeping the sleep of the innocent when I left."

"Cut that out now! I know you are only joshing me."

"You know, Lucretia—I believe that's your name—"

"Or cognomen," she said, laughing.

"In our part of the country we are early risers. We go to bed when the sun sets, and get up when it rises. I understand you in Chicago here go to bed when the sun rises, and get up by the light of the moon."

"That's pretty clever of you, but I'm dry. I haven't had a drink tonight."

"Bring us a bottle," he said, turning to the waiter who stood at his elbow.

"When are you going to take me to Nevada?" she inquired.

"Why, what in the name of goodness would I do with you in Nevada? Everybody has to work in my section, and if I had you there I would have to put you down in one of my mines with a pair of overalls on," laughing.

"Not on your life, Mr. Sharp. You would find me too useful to you there to put me down in a mine, and if you didn't want me I might find some rich old foggy that would be glad to have me."

"Possibly so, but you see where I am there are no rich old fogies or well-to-do young fools but myself."

The waiter arrived with the bottle, the cork flying up to the ceiling. He filled the glasses.

"That's the stuff to put life into you," she said, as she emptied her glass and then smacked her lips.

The man from Nevada pulled out his roll of bills and gave one to the waiter.

Lucretia looked on his pile with unfeigned admiration.

"Where do you get it?" she asked.

"You will see, if I take you out to Nevada."

"Then see that you do."

An hour was passed in by-talk and the consumption of the second bottle of champagne, when Lucretia rose abruptly. You will have to excuse me," she said.

"No, sit down."

"I will be back in a few minutes," she said, smiling and chucking him under the chin as she passed him.

The man from Nevada watched her as she went toward the front of the parlor, where he saw her in conversation with an extravagantly dressed fellow. He noticed some irritation between them, after which Lucretia left the fellow abruptly, returned and took her seat by her Nevada friend.

"You didn't think I was going to leave you, did you?"

"I didn't know."

"No danger. I'm going to stick to you as close as a porous plaster would stick on your broad back. Fill my glass."

"I'm afraid you're going to get full again," he said.

"What's the odds, as long as we're happy?"

When the second bottle of champagne was drunk, a bottle of beer was ordered. After it was about consumed, she yawned.

"My, but I'm tired! Let us retire."

"I see the madam can sit it out," he whispered to her as they passed the proprietress, who was giving strict attention to business.

"Easy for her. She stays in bed nearly all day. Dinah—that's the colored woman—brings her a cup of coffee to her bedside every morning about 7 o'clock, and if she's awake she drinks it, and then turns over her two hundred and fifty pounds of fat, and goes to sleep again."

When Lucretia had disrobed, she turned to her partner. "Now don't you run away, and leave me in the morning."

"Why, do you think I can loll around in the bed all day like your mistress?"

"Well, you wake me up then."

"No, I won't promise."

"Then you're mean."

"When Lucretia awoke about ten in the morning, she found herself alone, but consoled herself with the fairly sized bill she had. Turning over, she slept until the dinner bell aroused her from her slumbers.

The following Saturday night was a gala one in the house of Blomgarten. The madam was all smiles as the man from Nevada passed her. Lucretia was in earnest conversation with a young fop when he went toward the rear end of the room, where he was seated on two former visits. Lucretia forsook the young gentleman she had been talking to, and followed her mining friend from the west. When she reached him she said:

"I had about made up my mind never to speak to you again."

"Why that, Lucretia?"

"I told you before you left on Sunday morning to be sure and wake me, didn't I?"

"Yes, but it would be cruel to disturb you, you look so innocent when you're asleep," laughing.

"There, you're joshing me again."

"No, I'm sincere. Let us drink." He nodded to the

waiter, who, without inquiring his wants, brought in a bottle of champagne. The waiter, having heard the rumor that Lucretia had a wealthy miner on her staff, a man of untold wealth, and judging from the liberal tips he had received, he was prepared to substantiate the rumor, served the refreshments that he knew were to the taste of Miss Lucretia and the profit of his illustrious employer.

"Well, I forgive you this time," said the young lady, "but don't let it happen again."

"You seem very busy here this evening," said the Nevada man, looking around at the crowded parlors.

"Yes," said the girl, "but many of the young fops that are here tonight will be disappointed, as every girl in the house is engaged. Many of them are up in their rooms already and won't be down again tonight. You see the old swells hardly ever come into the parlor. They telephone over to their lady friends when they are coming, and, knowing their rooms, go right upstairs. Those young fools," whispering to him, "will buy drinks for those still here, and be sent home or to another house as soon as they find they've been hoaxed. Look at the madam jollying them two swells now," remarked Lucretia. "She's telling them to wait around. They're good spenders."

"Then you're probably left on the shelf tonight," said the Nevada man, laughing.

"Not on your tin-type. It'll be a cold day when Lucretia gets left. Did you notice that young swell I was talking to when you came in?"

"Yes."

"Well, I had to turn that fellow down when I saw you coming. I told him you were my 'steady,' so he would have to excuse me; besides, Mr. Sharp, I could have pick and choice here."

"I feel glad you are in such demand. I don't see why you want to go to Nevada, when you're so popular here."

"Rats! Do you think any of us women care for those fellows? It's their dough we're after."

"I suppose that's the value you put on me too?" smiling.

"You're somewhat different. I like your size, your vigor and your generous disposition. I would give up the whole bunch for a man like you."

"I see. I'll have to buy another bottle," said the man, laughing.

"I don't care whether you do or not," pouting.

"Bring us another bottle," he said to the waiter.

The crowd in the parlor began to thin out, the women leaving gradually, until but two or three were left. Ere the second bottle of champagne was consumed, Lucretia and the madam were the only two of their sex remaining.

"Let us retire," said Lucretia. "You see the madam is nearly piped in the absence of consumers. She's taken more than she's used to."

At this moment the madam arose, her gait being unsteady.

"Come," said Lucretia, "let us go."

"No, I am going to have another bottle of champagne."

"I don't think I can drink any more," protested Lucretia, "I'm as full as a tick."

"Bring a bottle," was his peremptory order to the waiter, who hastened to obey with alacrity.

The Nevada man's vigorous constitution seemed to enable him to withstand the drink. Not so Lucretia, whose vacant gaze and limp form on her chair from which she was in danger of falling showed she was in an advanced state of intoxication.

"I'm going to bed," she exclaimed, in a maudlin voice. "You can stay."

It was about 3:30 o'clock in the morning, when a stealthy step might be heard descending from the third floor. The party halted and listened. All was silent as the grave, except for the snoring of some of the inmates fast asleep in the adjoining rooms. After a few seconds, guided by the dim light from a bracket lamp that projected from the wall, the figure moved toward the room where Madam Blomgarten slept. He laid his hand on the knob of the door, turned it, the door opened, it creaked on its hinges. He paused to listen. All being quiet, he entered the room and approached the bed on which Madam Blomgarten lay. She was prone on her back. The man, whoever he was, paused for a moment. Just as a tiger would act before springing on his prey, he suddenly wound his giant hands around the madam's neck. She opened her eyes with a start, and attempted to scream. He tightened his grip so that but a gurgle could be heard. She struggled in the bed. He placed his knee on her abdomen. He saw her tongue protrude. He eased his pressure on her throat for a moment. She looked appealingly into his face.

"You remember Martha Hill!" he hissed between his teeth. "You worse than horlot! If you don't, then you remember Clementina Montague! Damn you!"

She again attempted to scream. He tightened his grip on her throat. "Hell awaits you!" he hissed into her ear. "Go you, and be eternally damned!" He increased the pressure on her throat until she ceased to struggle, her eyes staring wildly, her tongue protruding through her swollen lips. He paused for a time, but never relinquished his hold on her throat. At last, seemingly satisfied she was dead, he took a rope from his pocket on which there was a noose

and, placing it around her throat, pulled it with all his strength, until it began to eat into the flesh. Then, standing on the bed, he fastened it to the top of the post. He tried to lift the body to a standing position. In this he failed. So he had to content himself by rolling the body from the bed until the feet reached the floor in a half recumbent position. Leaving the room, he walked down the flight of stairs till he reached the door where the night watch, a colored man, was sleeping in his chair. He touched the man on the shoulder, who, rising and wiping his eyes, opened the door. The man then descended the marble steps, and hastily walked away.

That morning about 7:30 o'clock, according to custom, Dinah opened the madam's door, tray in hand. The sight she saw made the blood stand still in her veins.

"Murder! Murder!" she screamed, as the tray and all its contents fell to the floor with a crash.

"Murder! Murder!"

The roomers jumped from their beds in alarm. Men could be seen running down the stairs, some with their shoes in their hands, others with little but their pants on. Women in adjoining rooms, pale with fright, gazed into the room and shrieked with terror. Some of the men present made for the back entrance, dressing themselves as they ran. An elderly gray-whiskered man, rushing with his coat and vest on his arm, and but one shoe on, met the terrified colored man in the passage. "What's up!" he shouted. "I don't know," said the fleeing man, as he dashed down the marble steps, and found an adjacent passage in which he lingered to put on his clothes. Mugsy, who was soon on the scene, was accosted by a very stout man, who had not even time to put his undershirt on.

"Mugsy!" he exclaimed, "for God's sake get me out of here, and there's a hundred for you."

"What's up?" asked one of a little group that had already congregated around the door. "Is the place on fire?"

"Yes!" exclaimed a retreating figure.

"Fire! Fire!" shouted the crowd. Policemen came running from all directions. A sergeant, followed by some of his men, rushed up the steps, and into the house.

"Up stairs!" shouted the colored man. Just then the gongs of the fire apparatus could be heard, and the clatter of horses' hoofs. The fire patrol was first on the scene. The men jumped off, some with tarpaulins on their shoulders, others with fire extinguishers.

The sergeant of police, having reached the room in which the body hung, seeing what the trouble was, shouted orders. "See to the doors back and front, let no one in or out!" He nodded to the fireman in charge.

"Captain," he said, "this is our job. You can call your men off."

Mugsy and the colored man, the only two men present, were immediately placed under arrest. The others had escaped, many leaving part of their raiment behind them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE THIRD DEGREE.

On the arrival of a superior officer from the police department, he gave orders to take all inmates to headquarters, and leave men in charge of the place to await further instructions.

The girls were ordered to dress and get ready to leave. Some of them kicked vigorously, protesting that they were too sick; others went back to bed and covered themselves up in hopes of escaping observation. Policemen searched the house from basement to garret. Where they found a damsel in bed they rudely dragged the clothes off and told her to get up and dress. Many protested, nagging the officers, who paid no attention, but said:

“If you don’t put your clothes on we will take you as you are.”

The coroner had arrived, who took a perfunctory view of the remains, and then told the officers in charge that one of his deputies would hold an inquest in the afternoon.

A special policeman, one of the ruling race who had been long in the service, was placed in charge of the room.

Great crowds had gathered outside the house, blocking the streets to await the pull which they surmised was going to take place. The patrol wagons had trouble to get in front of the house, the crowd was so dense. At length when the wagons got in position, and the policemen took their place on either side of the steps, after driving the onlookers back. Mugsy was seen coming down the steps, followed by,

the doorkeeper, and then Dinah. Those created little interest, until the women of the underworld began to show. Many of those among the onlookers who knew them called their names as they appeared, and addressed them jokingly. Others jeered at them and laughed, as the police officers hurried these along who were tardy or who wanted to stop on the steps so as to see if there were any familiar faces in the crowd. The officers had little patience with those, and, giving them a push, cried:

“Come, move on there, step lively!”

When the lady so accosted would turn to express her indignation, the crowd would set up a roar, and some of them would say:

“Reach him one, Seraphina—or Julia!”

“Give him hell!” another would shout, amid roars of laughter, as the obstinate one was pushed into the waiting wagon.

When all were seated in the police patrol wagons, officers stood on the steps of each of the vehicles, and when orders were given to go ahead the crowd set up a yell. Several of the girls, having recovered from their discomfiture, waved their hands and smiled at their acquaintances, or as if in derision of those who were gibing them.

After quietness was restored on the street, and in the house, the police officer of long service on the force went into the room where Sadie was strung up, and, with more feeling than judgment, seeing the very uncomfortable position the corpse was placed in, removed the rope from the top of the bed post, and let the body fall flat on the floor. He thought for a moment of lifting her on the bed, but that was too heavy an undertaking. So he let her lie where she fell. The sergeant on his rounds, in visiting the room, saw

what his subordinate had done, and exclaimed, "Who in h—— has interfered with the corpse!"

"Sure, I have," said the veteran."

"Well, I'll be damned! What made you do that?"

"What harm? I didn't like to see the poor woman lying so uncomfortable, and all I did was just to lay her down. What harm can be in that?"

"You'll find out when the lieutenant or the coroner comes."

"Well, I'll put her back then."

"No. Let her lie now!" as he took his leave.

The deputy coroner arrived early in the afternoon with the regular profesional jurors he always had on his staff. They viewed the remains, and came to the conclusion she was dead, and, without further investigation, in compliance with a request from the police department, the coroner swore his men in to uphold the constitution, etc., etc., and adjourned for two weeks; giving permission to any one who might want to go to the trouble to inter the remains, after which he and his faithful six adjourned to a neighboring saloon to get fresh ones.

At police headquarters an investigation was proceeding to ascertain what the inmates of the house knew of the affair.

Dinah, the colored maid, was the first witness called. She stated that on going to the room about 7:30 in the morning with a cup of coffee for the missus she saw her lying close to the bed fastened to a rope hanging from the bed post.

"What did you do then?" inquired the interviewer.

"I screamed murder! I was terribly frightened."

"You are the madam's maid, I understand?"

"Yes, sir, and have charge of the wine locker."

"Do you know whether the windows looking into the passage from your mistress' room are fastened at night?"

"No, sir."

"Do any of the men or women around the place have occasion to visit your mistress' room?"

"No, sir. I makes the missus' bed and tidies up her room for her, but some of the girls, when they want change early in the morning, may have to go in to see her if she's in bed."

"Is she in the habit of locking her room at night?"

"No, as I go to her room nearly every morning."

"I suppose you knew some of the men who were in the house that night?"

"Very few, sir, as I am supposed to know nobody."

"Well, you jog your memory, because we will have to know who was in the house that evening, and the following morning."

Dinah was allowed to retire.

"Call Mugsy in."

Mugsy, on appearing, was addressed in familiar tones.

"Well, Mugsy, what do you know about this affair?"

"I don't know anything. I went to bed about 2 A. M., as there were few in the parlors, and slept until 7, when I heard the colored woman scream. I jumped up and ran toward the room where I found the missus just as the officers saw her."

"Have you any suspicion of any one?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know many personally who occupied the house that night?"

"Yes, I know some."

"Have you any reason to believe that any of those present had any ill feeling against the madam?"

"No, sir. Nearly all those who were there that night were there by appointment."

"You knew many of them, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"We will want you to give us their names."

"I wouldn't like to do that."

"We don't care as to your likes or dislikes. We'll expect you to give us such information as will help us to unravel the case. Our conjecture is that none but a man committed this crime, and whoever he was must have known the location and furniture in her room, as the rope with which she was strangled was attached to the post of a bed, and preparations for such action had to be made in advance."

Mugsy began to feel uneasy, as his inquisitor looked steadily at him, but his courage never failed him.

"Before I give any names I will have to see my friend, and probably consult a lawyer."

"Just as you wish, but I will hold you for the present."

Mugsy was led to a cell and locked up.

The colored doorkeeper was next in turn.

"What's your position in the house?" the investigator inquired.

"Doorkeeper, sir."

"You let the people in and out?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your position then is such that it enables you to become acquainted with many of the regular patrons of the establishment?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you know many who spent the night there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, where were you when the first alarm was given—that's when Dinah screamed murder?"

"I was asleep in my chair close by the door."

"What did you do then?"

"I opened the door for some of the gentlemen who wanted to go out, and stayed at my post."

"Did you notice any of those who went past you as being specially excited?"

"Dey was all excited, sir. Some of the gentlemen nearly fell down the steps."

"Have you any suspicion of any one that you noticed fleeing away?"

"No, sir; they were all gentlemen."

"Sergeant," addressing an officer present, "you take this man and have him give you the names of those who he knew were present," and, turning to the colored man, he said:

"My man, see that you tell all you know. I might inform you that you're suspected already."

"Good lord! Mr. Officer, how can you 'spect me?"

"Well, I've warned you."

The officer was in the act of leading him away, when the lieutenant said, "Stop a minute, I want to ask you another question. Between the hours of 2 A. M. and the time of the alarm, how many people did you let out?"

"I forget exactly, but there were three or four."

"Did you recognize any of those that went out between those hours I mentioned?"

"No, sir. I am not supposed to look over-particular at them. They don't like it, so I just open the door when I see them coming along the passage."

"That's all," beckoning to the officer to take him away.

The women were then called in turn. None of them

could give any light on the affair. Some had retired early in the evening, and heard nothing until awakened in the morning by the screaming of the colored woman.

"You had a friend with you that night?" was the query put to all.

"Yes, sir."

"What was his name?"

Some refused flatly to "peach." All of those an officer was told to take to a cell.

"I will give you a chance to cool off and refresh your memory," he said to the aggressive ones.

Some who were timid made no bones of it, but gave the name and standing of the party they had in tow. Others protested they didn't know who the gentleman was. "He was only a casual visitor."

The lieutenant's experience easily formed an opinion of the truthfulness of their statements and passed them up with but a few unimportant and sometimes irrelevant questions to the amusement of those present.

When it came Lucretia's turn, the lieutenant, seeing her youthful appearance, inquired, "How long have you followed the calling you are in now?"

"About four years," in a confident tone.

"You must have commenced early?" said the lieutenant.

"Yes."

"You had a friend that night?"

"Yes." She seemed determined to speak in monosyllables.

"Do you know his name?"

"No."

"Well, what do you know about him?"

"That he was a thorough gentleman."

"I suppose he was liberal with you?"

"Yes, he was all right."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"Yes, Nevada."

"How do you know he was from Nevada?"

"He told me so. He owns a gold mine out there." This she said with a degree of pride.

"What leads you to believe he owned a gold mine?"

"Because he told me so, and had lots of money."

"Did you see his wad?"

"Yes, he had a roll of big bills, enough to stop a truck with."

"And you let him get away with it?"

"I'm no thief," indignantly.

"Well, you got some of it?"

"Yes, all I was entitled to."

"Did he spend much at the madam's?"

"Yes, lots."

"Was he in the habit of visiting you?"

"Yes."

"What time did he leave that morning?"

"I don't know; he always used to leave early."

"Do you expect him to call on you again?"

"I am not sure now, on account of this trouble. If it had not been for it, I was going back to Nevada with him."

"You think he was all right then, and not a gay deceiver?" looking jokingly at her.

"I know he was."

"Well, we'll have to take your word for it—that's all, Miss."

All the women who had freely given up the names of their men and those who had relented after a few hours in the cooler were discharged, with an admonition that they would have to report in a few days at headquarters, when



"I AM NO THIEF"



they would be notified of the date of the inquest, as they might be wanted for witnesses.

That morning being Monday, Matthew Howard had no sooner sat down to his breakfast than Rachel said, "Matt, have you read of that horrible murder in Chicago?"

"No, where was it?"

She picked up the paper and, finding the item, which gave a graphic description of the killing of Madam Blomgarten, he read it carefully. Matt laid the paper down in a thoughtful manner, and began his breakfast.

The result of the investigation by the police in reference to the killing of Madam Blomgarten had produced little fruit, except the disclosure that some thirteen of Chicago's eminent and most respected citizens were in close proximity to where the tragedy had taken place. Their names, occupations and addresses were laid snugly away in the desk of a lieutenant of police. Mugsy was not asked to further testify. He had got in touch with his old friend, Mr. Dent, who in turn had notified a professional bondsman to bail him out, and furnish such bonds as might be deemed necessary for his instant release.

When the chief had heard of the humanitarian act of the veteran policeman, who had removed the rope from the bed post so as to give Sadie Blomgarten a more restful position on the floor, he got furious and swore like a trooper at the sergeant who had given him the information.

"Why did you put such a duish as old Muldoon in charge of the body? Didn't you know that that d—— old fool would make a blunder if possible?"

"I couldn't see how he could," said the sergeant, meekly.

"Well, leave it to him, he'll find a way, but don't mention it to any one until you hear further. Have they laid out the body?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then get the rope and give part of it to five or six of our plain clothes men, who will visit the hardware stores and inquire if any suspicious persons have been purchasing any rope of a similar character in the past few days, and, as you are in charge, go notify the press which is eager for news that we are hot on the trail of the assassin and expect to make arrests before night. You see, Serg., we will have to do something to save our face."

The sergeant grinned. "All right," he said, "I'll dope them properly." He was anxious to redeem himself for the blunder of putting the veteran policeman in charge of Sadie's remains.

The plain clothes men who visited the hardware and other stores, on making inquiry as to the purchasers of sash cords, were met with the general reply:

"Why, that's so and so's sash cord, (mentioning the name of the maker). It's in general use. We sell some of it every day." So that clue was abandoned.

It happened at the time that both the city administration and the coroner were in close touch, and the chief and the city authorities called in the coroner for a conference. The chief laid the facts as he had learned them before him.

"We haven't a single clue to work on," he said, "and to summon those who were in the house on the night of the murder to give evidence before your jury would shake Chicago's society from its foundation."

With that he handed the list of names he had to the coroner, who whistled and grinned as he looked over them, and then handed them to a representative of the executive who, after scanning them over, smiled and looked significantly at both chief and coroner.

"And another difficulty I have to contend against," said the chief, "and I have kept it quiet: an old fossil of a policeman took the rope from the bed post she was hanging from and let her drop to the floor before your deputy," looking at the coroner, "reached the scene."

"Well, what do you propose?" inquired the coroner, looking at the chief of police.

"That she committed suicide."

The coroner laughed.

"It's the only thing," said the chief.

The representative of the executive nodded. He still had the list of names in his hand.

"Who is the deputy in charge?" he inquired, addressing the coroner.

"M—— B——."

"Well, he's all right, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose," said the chief, "he has his regular jury with him?"

"Sure," replied the coroner.

"Then there should be no difficulty," said the representative of the executive.

"But what about the state's attorney?" inquired the coroner.

"Let him go to h——," replied the chief, "and do what he pleases. He is no good, anyhow."

Two weeks after Sadie Blomgarten was killed six good men and true sat on her.

Dinah, the colored woman, the policeman who was first on the scene, and the doorkeeper testified. The deputy coroner asked them a few irrelevant questions. The foreman of the jury looked at the deputy.

The deputy said, "I believe that is sufficient."

The six men sworn to maintain the constitution, etc., etc., retired and brought in a unanimous verdict:

"That Sadie Blomgarten, during a fit of temporary insanity, had committed suicide."

A verdict that was heartily approved by the thirteen influential and honored citizens, whose names and addresses the chief had, and from whom he expected a liberal contribution to the next campaign fund.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TRIANGLE.

In "the good old days," when Chicago was an open town, and when no **Personal Liberty League** was required to defend the inalienable rights of the dear people, there stood opposite the Union Depot on Canal street, between Adams and Madison streets, a row of saloons, each a temple of liberty, open to receive "strangers." and, as recorded in Holy writ, "ever ready to take them in."

During the liberal times we refer to there was a large influx of foreigners to our shores, with little knowledge of the generous disposition of the proprietors of those institutions, who provided guides, or "runners" as they were called, to steer the uninformed from the depot to the place where lunch was given away, where they might leave their little worldly goods for safe keeping, meet nice sociable parties who would entertain them during their stay with a friendly game of dice, or cards, and so amuse them after their long, tedious journey on the train that brought them after a probably longer voyage over the briny sea. The Union Depot was a fruitful field for men in the same line of business as Mr. Isaac Rosenthal's, who were ever ready to conduct a lone girl who was in doubt as to the way she should go. They were ever ready to lead her to a harbor of rest or place of employment, sometimes going to the expense of hiring a cab to facilitate her travel. Nor was their solicitude for the traveling public confined exclusively to the cause of women; occasionally they found a man who

might want advice as to where to put up for a time between his arrival and departure.

In those days little attention was given to emigrants by either government or railway officials. The latter landed them at the place their railway tickets were good for, and then their obligations ceased. And the United States Government, ever opposed to what is called paternalism, allowed the strangers to shift for themselves. While the police authorities in those days, who owed their places on the force to the politicians, discreetly took care of themselves, and seldom or ever interfered in matters that they considered did not concern them, or they were in cahoots with the grafters, which recent developments in the police force of the present day would warrant us was possible at that time. The system in operation by Ike Rosenthal and his gang was, on the arrival of an emigrant train they mingled freely with the crowd, anxiously scanning the faces of the strangers, as if in search of some person they expected. They never interfered with groups. But on observing a lone woman, or girl, they would accost her in her native language. (Ike and his associates spoke many tongues.) She in a strange land accosted in her native language by one whom she believed to be her countryman immediately became imbued with confidence and told what she knew of any person resembling the description, and if she had failed in observing any person such as they described she told them so. Ike and his friends assumed to be in great distress. The young person they were inquiring about was a sister, or cousin, or some very dear friend, who, they were sure, sailed on the same boat that brought her. The woman, or girl, they were holding conversation with sympathized with them in their anxiety as a rule. But she herself was a stranger, who probably expected to meet some person or persons to guide

her to her friends if she had any in the city, but who, through some error as to the time of the arrival of the train, or other unforeseen circumstance, was not there to receive her.

So she willingly accepted the advice or assistance of the nice young gentlemen who unselfishly were willing to lead her to the address, if she had one, or to some place suitable to her present necessities. And so she fell! one of the thousands lost to friends and kindred. The population of our country was not so large in those days as it is at present, when it is computed that 50,000 women and girls are swallowed up annually by the Moloch or some other infernal deity.

In those days there were few, if any, to keep records of the waifs and strays of the time, unlike today where many excellent men and women are banded together for the purpose of fighting those who believe in and profit from commercialized vice. And it would seem as if the forces arrayed against the vicious element in the community are gradually storming their outworks and will soon have their citadel leveled to the dust, when "Virtue will triumph over Vice."

Another healthy sign of the times is the change of sentiment among the people as to the status of those addicted to alcoholism. But a very few years ago, the man who was a drunkard was looked upon with commiseration, a good fellow but unfortunate. Changing opinion today foreshadows that ere many years he will be treated as a criminal, who violates every rule of good society, who shows a horrid example to others—a man to be condemned, ostracized by every decent person, one who brings scandal on his kith and kindred, misery, poverty, and degradation on those whom he has sworn to honor, support, and protect, even upon the very offspring God hath given to him as a blessing, but whom

he deserts in his love for liquor and the smiles of the grogery-keeper, whose wife wears furs while his is dressed in tatters.

The children of the one are well fed and well clad, while his, the drunkard's, go without food, shoes, or shelter. Such a man is a criminal in the full meaning of the word, because he avoids his most solemn and binding obligations, shirks his duty, and imposes on the community who invariably have to come to the rescue or aid of those he was bound to support. He is a canker on the body politic, and punishment commensurate with his crime should be meted out to him. It is often said that the good things of this world are unevenly divided. How much out of proportion they must be when a sordid sot is kept in employment and a decent, sober, industrious person is permitted to walk our streets, day after day, in search of employment so as to provide for those he loves and is anxious to cherish? If those deductions are true, the inquiry now made of all those seeking employment in commercial or manufacturing institutions is justifiable, when he who seeks a job is asked to answer whether or not he is addicted to the use of alcohol. And as a final proposition we would inquire of all our readers, is it to be wondered at if the children of the drunkards fall into evil ways, or is it, as recorded in Holy Writ, that "the sins of the Father shall visit the children even to the third generation?"

But, to our story. The runners around the depot, with brass badges on their arms or breasts, and the name of a hotel on a band around their caps, met the trains as they arrived and importuned strangers to seek rest and refreshments in their place, where everything was nice and respectable, and good lunch served free. The simpleton once in the clutches of the runner was an easy mark, he was

lucky to get away with his clothes; if he had some baggage with him, and it was found that he was only waiting for an outgoing train, his bag, case, or bundle was oftentimes rifled, so that when he reached his final destination he might find the most of his valuables either stolen or strayed. If he was especially easy to work, he might be inveigled into a sociable game of dice for drinks. At the beginning he might have temporary success at which his newly found acquaintances would laugh with seeming glee, especially when the house got stuck, the bar tender as a rule being one of the players, who kept tab of the drinks as they were served; in the final shake-off as to who would pay for all, he always failed and when the total amount was figured up for him he got a surprise, his kick was in vain. If he protested aloud he was abused, threatened, and denounced as a beat who was trying to "put it over" on them. There was no chance to escape for him, as all the hangers-on who had become interested in the game stood between him and the door. He was even threatened with arrest, and ultimately was forced to pay, told to get out and his baggage or what still remained of it thrown after him amid the jeers of the crowd who called him a quitter, if not worse.

Ike Rosenthal and his pals arrived one day at the Union depot to meet the emigrant train a short time before it was due. Going to the board on which it was recorded whether the train was on time or not, they found it would be two hours late.

"Let us go over to —," mentioning the name of a co-religionist of his, who kept a saloon opposite the railway station. On entering the bar room they were very much amused to find an elderly man whose long whiskers, rustic garb and top boots would indicate he was a farmer. He had been shaking dice for the drinks before Ike and his

pals came in. The bartender nodded familiarly to Rosenthal when he saw him enter.

"What are you going to have, gentlemen?" said the bartender to the newcomers.

"I have just lost a drink—what will you take?"

Ike and his four associates gave their order and were duly served, the man behind the bar putting the amount down on a tab so as not to cheat his employer, who was one of those in the game.

Ike and his friends became very much interested in the sport; Ike espousing the cause of the farmer, and proposing to back him for a dollar. The wager was immediately taken up by one of his friends. The game had proceeded some time, when a proposition was made that the four who were playing should shake the dice for who'd pay for all. There was some discussion as to how it should be decided. Rosenthal who was backing the farmer made a suggestion, that they should all shake, the highest dropping out each time until two were left, those two to shake and the loser to pay for all. The farmer preferred to pay his share and quit.

"Go on," said Ike, tapping him on the shoulder. "I'll bet five you're not stuck."

The runner who had landed him was also confident of his ultimate success, or professed to be, so urged him to stick. The farmer still hesitated but, being persistently urged by his newly made acquaintances, consented to go to the finish.

"I'll bet ten to five my friend hasn't to pay for the drinks," said Ike Rosenthal, flourishing a ten-dollar bill.

"I will take your fifteen to five," said one of his chums; "that's the betting."

"I'll bet him if you'll go me half," said Ike, looking at the countryman, who disclaimed being a gambler.

In the first trial the farmer was third. The saloon keeper, who was one of the contestants, being highest, was exempt.

"I'll take a cigar on this one," he said, laughing.

The game was stopped while the cigars and drinks were being served. The farmer would take nothing, his idea being to curtail the cost if the worst happened to him.

At the second attempt, when the three remaining shook off, the countryman was a good second.

More drinks and cigars, and then the final tussle. Ike Rosenthal was loud in his support of the stranger.

"I'll bet a tenner my friend wins," he said flourishing a roll of bills.

"I will take your two to one," exclaimed one of his accomplices.

"What do you take me for?" exclaimed Ike, assuming some temper.

There was some by-play among the consumers present as the countryman began to show a white feather, even proposing to pay half and let it go at that. Against this proposition the bar keeper protested loudly—it was all or nothing with him. The crowd, seeing the necessity of bracing the sucker up, began to express increased confidence in his ultimate success.

"I will bet fifteen to ten, if you let me shake for him," said Rosenthal hastily.

The bar keeper would not agree to this. "I am shaking against this gentleman," he said, meekly, "and you're not in the game."

This snub seemed to arouse Rosenthal's ire, who told the farmer in a confident manner, "Go ahead, you're sure to beat him."

The countryman ultimately, but with some reluctance,

shook and lost, when those present offered their condolence.

"You're out of luck, old man!" said Rosenthal, in a sympathetic strain.

The bar keeper, after serving the last round, figured up from his tab, and announced the bill as eleven dollars and seventy cents.

The farmer set up a howl and protested he wouldn't pay. This estranged all his former supporters, who shook him.

The bar keeper, professing anger, said, "You'll pay before you leave here."

The runner who had brought him in had placed his baggage behind the bar for safe keeping.

The countryman was at bay—he wasn't going to pay any such amount.

"You won't; won't you?" shouted the bar keeper, reaching to the shelf behind him and producing a horse pistol about a foot and a half long, one that had done service in the Revolutionary war, and pointed it at the man who had backed up against the wall.

"Don't shoot him! Don't shoot him!" exclaimed a number who were present, as if in alarm, and who went between the man with the gun and the man he was pointing it at.

"He'll pay," said Ikey Rosenthal, who could hardly suppress his laughter.

The landlord thought it was time to interfere and remonstrate with the man as to why he would not pay his score. The man still remaining obdurate, he gave instructions to one of his followers to go get a policeman.

When one of "the finest" arrived he adjudicated the case by saying to the man, "If you lost you must pay and if you don't I'll have to take you down."

The man, seeing no redress and fearing arrest, paid the amount; the bar keeper handing him his baggage. When he was going out the door, the saloon keeper said,

"Wait, and take something. Don't go away mad."

But the countryman was in no humor to take either his drink or advice.

"Let us go," said Rosenthal, looking at his watch, "we'll miss this train."

"Take something before you go. What will you have, Jim?" addressing the policeman.

They all drank, the policeman, the decoys, and the saloon keeper; the unsavory bunch having a mutual understanding to aid and not retard business in their separate lines.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ROBERT HILL TAKES A VACATION.

Robert Hill read the Chicago papers very carefully for days after the killing of Sadie Blomgarten to see how the press and public took it. He smiled when he came across the paragraph informing their readers that the Chicago police were hot on the trail of the assassin, and would probably have the culprit in the toils before night. Another item that interested him was the statement that grave suspicion pointed to Mugsy, who had been held pending further inquiry. He was anxious to hear what the coroner's verdict would be, but, as that august body had adjourned for two weeks, he had to curb his impatience.

The verdict he hoped for was that Sadie Blomgarten was strangled by some person to whom she had done a grievous wrong, believing as he did that such a decision would be a warning to others like her in the same line of business to refrain from purchasing innocent girls and forcing them into a life of shame.

On the fourth day after the execution of Sadie the newspapers had a description of her funeral, which was of an imposing character. The proprietors of every house of illfame with any standing in the community were there in carriages, as were their inmates. The names of the pallbearers were given, all with but two exceptions being the proprietors of tough saloons in the neighborhood; these two exceptions were a bartender and Mugsy, who was released the day before.

But what interested him most of all was an announcement that a person by the name of Isaac Rosenthal was chief assistant to the funeral director, and that to him in a great measure the credit of the magnificent demonstration should be given, as it was he who had sent out the notices as to the day and hour of funeral and the advisability of making the affair one of such proportions, as a token of the high esteem the lady was held in and from a commercial point of view advertising at the same time the fine figures and fine feathers of the girls of the underworld, but who Ike believed should be considered as on top. Hill knew the name of his sister's betrayer, but had no knowledge of his address or where he might be found, and his experience in the search of his sister led him to believe that if he had to hunt for him in the labyrinth of vice in Chicago it might take weeks or months to find him. His first impulse was to employ Tony, but he abandoned that idea as quickly as he conceived it.

After giving the matter some considerable thought he decided on a plan, which proved successful.

He wrote a letter, imitating a woman's writing as nearly as he could, as follows, and took chances on its delivery:

"Mr. Isaac Rosenthal.

Dear Sir:—As one of those who attended the funeral of our late lamented sister Sadie Blomgarten, I was much impressed by your gentlemanly conduct, and your very excellent management of the whole affair. I have a desire to make your acquaintance. I am a young woman of eighteen and some people say of prepossessing appearance, and as I live at home with my people it would be unwise for you to address your reply to my house, so would ask you to

send me your address to General Delivery Chicago, so that I may further communicate with you, with the ultimate object of a personal interview.

Sincerely yours,

Theresa Nightingale."

After writing the letter, Robert Hill had some doubts as to whether the person at the window of the general delivery would give him Rosenthal's reply, even if he sent one.

"I will take a chance," he said to himself. "If the letter reaches the postoffice, even if they don't give it to me, I probably can devise a way to get it, so I will mail mine from Chicago the first time I'm up."

He addressed the letter to the home of the late Madam Blomgarten, feeling confident it would be delivered.

On the Thursday evening following the tragedy he called at the store. Rachel was rejoiced to see him. Her brother Matt, who stood close by, stared at him before he spoke.

"Well, Matt, how is business?" Hill said in a most casual manner.

Howard still gazed at him to see if any facial expression on Hill's part would lead him to believe that he surmised Howard's knowledge of the death of Sadie Blomgarten, and how it was brought about, but no such expression was apparent.

"Business is good," said Matt. After a pause, "How is the sculptor getting on with that monument he is preparing for you?"

"Slowly," was Hill's reply. "You see it is a big job, and, as he has more urgent work to do at times, I have instructed him that he may delay mine. I don't want him to

hurry it anyhow, as I am paying a good price for it and want a good job."

"I suppose it will be extra grand?" said Rachel.

"I think you will like it," was Hill's reply. "It will be both massive and artistic."

"When will it be ready?" queried Matt.

"In about a month."

"I supposed you could get one all ready to put up," ventured Rachel.

"Not to my liking."

The subject was then dropped for ordinary conversation. When Hill left Matthew Howard was in a quandary—he found for the first time in his life that he could not fathom his friend's thoughts.

Hill went to Chicago on Saturday as usual, and mailed the letter to Rosenthal in a far north side box, made a few purchases for himself and other members of his family and bought a magnificent bunch of American Beauties for Rachel Howard. Catching an early train, he was back in B—— in time to present them to her.

Rachel was delighted. She saw in the gift an indication that Bob was coming back to his old self, and her heart was glad.

Matt was exceptionally well pleased.

"You didn't stay long this time?"

"No, I was lucky to get through and get the train back. But I must be getting home. I have a few things here," alluding to a bundle he had under his arm for the old woman and some of the youngsters.

Another week had passed, and Howard scanning his paper one morning was more than surprised to read of the inquest held on the remains of Sadie Blomgarten, that she had committed suicide during a fit of temporary insanity,

that the authorities had made the most searching inquiry, and that the evidence given before the coroner left no room for any other verdict but that, in a fit of temporary insanity, she had taken her life.

Howard did not know what to think; the evidence, however, was clear, the jury must have learned the facts, and, after all his suspicion, his friend Hill had neither act nor part in it.

Hill had read the same article on the same morning and could not help but smile. "I'll go over to Matt's this evening," he chuckled to himself. "I suppose he'll be brim full of news."

On his arriving at Howard's, Matt looked hard at him as if to see if he was posted. Hill began a conversation on some trifling subject, and at length, Howard's patience being exhausted, he called Hill to one side.

"Bob, did you hear the news?"

"No, nothing in particular."

"Then it's a startler. Do you know Madam Blomgarten committed suicide?"

"You don't say!"

"Yes, it's in this morning's paper."

"Let me read it."

"Rachel, have you the morning paper there?"

"Yes, here it is," handing it to her brother who, in turn, handed it to Hill, at the same time pointing to the paragraph.

Robert Hill assumed to read it very carefully. When he had read it through, he said, turning to his friend,

"I believe there is a God in Israel after all."

That was his sole comment.

Before his next visit to Chicago he addressed a letter to the General Delivery department, purporting that Miss

Theresa Nightingale was sick and unable to call for her own mail, and if any was there would they please be kind enough to give it to her brother who would present this letter.

On handing it to the nice young gentleman who attended to the General Delivery, he read it carefully, then looked at the eminently respectable man who confronted him and handed him the letter without a moment's hesitation.

Hill placed the letter in his pocket, thanked the young man, and walked rapidly away. At a safe distance he went into a restaurant, ordered some lunch and, while the attendant went to bring the food, he eagerly opened and scrutinized the letter. Ikey had fallen for it. He wrote he was delighted to hear from the young lady, and would feel honored to hear further from her. His residence was — Ave., but he would be glad to meet her at any place and at any time she should designate. Before writing his answer to Miss Nightingale, he had shown her note to his friends, who chuckled over it.

"I'll bet she's a peach," said one.

"You must have impressed her," said another.

"Hypnotized her," is the proper word, said a third.

Ikey Rosenthal swelled his breast with pride and began to figure what was in it. His mental calculations proving satisfactory, he ordered a drink. One of his friends jokingly proposed Miss Theresa Nightingale's health, while the others laughed at the witticism.

Mr. Robinson, manager at the mill, was somewhat surprised one evening after working hours, when Hill informed him he thought of taking a vacation.

"You see, Mr. Robinson, I have everything in good shape here now, and William being about as proficient as myself, you'll never miss me for a couple of weeks."

"You stay for a month, Bob, if you like. The mill will be here when you come back. Where are you thinking of going?"

"I am going down East. I intend to visit some places like ours. While away, I may learn something."

"Then charge it up to the firm," said Robinson.

"Do you want me to put my laundry and cigar bills in? and I might want to treat a girl if I should happen to meet one while away," said Bob, laughing. "And how would the directors like to read of that?"

"Put it down for 'miscellaneous,'" replied Robinson, "or current expenses," laughing in return. "That's what the drummers do."

"No! No!" said Hill. "I am well satisfied with my vacation with full pay."

"When do you intend to go?"

"Saturday."

"Well, I'm pleased you're going and hope you'll enjoy yourself."

When he told the Howards, Matt expressed his pleasure at his going.

"You had better take me with you," said Rachel.

"I may—some day," said Hill, significantly, in a tone no way displeasing to Howard's sister.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

VENGEANCE.

On the Sunday morning after Hill's arrival in Chicago he set out to find the location of the house Rosenthal had given the number of. He was somewhat surprised to find from appearances it was a residence street, and remote from the "red light" district. In passing along the street he took notice of the numbers and found that one was that Rosenthal had given in his note to Miss Theresa Nightingale. The house was a fairly well kept brick building of three stories, the brass work on the door was well polished, the steps clean, and a little green patch in front seemed to be well kept. There was an air of respectability about the entire place, in fact he began to wonder if Mr. Rosenthal was a family man, if he had a wife and children, or was this the abode of his parents? He noticed in many windows and on doorposts on the street a card on which was printed "furnished rooms to rent," or "room to rent on the 1st flat," or whatever the location might be.

Hill took a careful view of the surroundings.

Among other matters that came under his observation was an alley some hundred feet south of the address he had. A lamp-post stood a little way from the corner of the alley. Satisfied as to the street and number, and the general location, Hill decided to cease his investigation for the day, visited some of the parks, and spent the evening in his room at the hotel where he had put up.

To make inquiries around the place as to who occupied

the house under consideration might attract attention; that he wished to avoid.

On Monday morning, as early as 8 o'clock, he stationed himself a full block from the house he was there to watch. He noticed many persons leave it, men and women, but none in any way resembling the description of the party he sought, until near 10 o'clock, when he observed a dapper young fellow descending the steps. As he got nearer he noticed his cuffs protruded nearly three inches lower than his coat sleeve. As he came nearer still he could observe the ribbon at his side with an elaborate seal, he had a ring on his finger, and a bright stone in his shirt front. On the whole he seemed dressed as would become a young gentleman, occupying a good social position. Hill wondered if that could be the party he was in quest of.

Whoever he was, he walked jauntily along, twisting the cane he held in his hand, till he came to a corner where a cigar store was situated. He went in, staying but a few minutes. When he came out he had a lighted cigar in his mouth and continued his journey until he came to a cross section on which there were street cars running. A car approaching rapidly he ran and jumped on, when Hill lost sight of him. He intended to follow on the next car, but the time between the cars was so long that Hill was compelled to give up the chase for the day.

The following morning Hill took his position a little way from that which he had taken the previous day. The same persons seemed to come from the same house, and at about the same time as on the day before. The very well dressed young gentleman came down the steps and pursued his way until he came to the cigar store before mentioned, went in, and in a few minutes came out smoking a cigar. After he had gotten away a little distance Hill walked into

the store and, looking over the cigars in the case as if he was a connoisseur, said,

"I want to get four nice cigars for a half."

"Havana or domestic?" asked the man behind the counter.

"I'm not particular."

"Well, here's a nice cigar," taking a box which still remained on the glass counter, "we sell a good many of those. A gentleman who just went out uses them regularly and speaks highly of them."

"You mean that well dressed fellow that I saw going out before I came in?"

"Yes, he visits me nearly ever morning."

"Judging from his appearance he can afford to," smiling.

"I suppose he's a banker or railway director."

The man laughed, but made no further comment.

"Take one with me," said Hill, pushing one of the cigars in the direction of the storekeeper and, going to a stand where there was a little gas blazing, lit his own.

After taking a few puffs he remarked,

"Those are all right. Your customer who has just left might be complimented on his judgment. I suppose he has plenty of money anyhow."

"Yes," said the man, in a confidential mood, "he gets it easy."

"Why, what does he do?" inquired Hill in an offhand manner.

"Does everybody he can," said the cigar dealer, laughing. "He's an all around sport and gambler."

"He lives around here, does he?"

"Yes, a little way up the street. His name is Rosenthal."

Hill felt the blood tingling in his veins.

"Good day!" he said, as he was leaving.

"Call again," said the man, "and thank you."

Hill, on the third morning of his pursuit, stationed himself at the crossing where he expected Rosenthal to take his car. He let many cars go by him, until he saw his quarry coming. Signaling the car to stop he got on and took a seat, followed a moment later by Mr. Rosenthal, who went right through to the front, as he was smoking. Hill noticed he was well known, a fellow passenger on the car saying,

"Well, Ikey, how are they coming?"

"Pretty good," was Ikey's reply.

Hill had no further doubt. "That's the man who trapped my sister," he said to himself, a look of hate mantling his face which he covered with his hand. He watched till Rosenthal was about to get off, and took his place behind a number who were of the same mind, and following Rosenthal at some distance saw him turn into a saloon.

Hill took up a position some distance away, to await Rosenthal's coming out, but after a vigil of upward of two hours the party he was watching never showed up. He came to the conclusion, which proved to be correct, that the place under consideration was a rendezvous. The following day, at about the time he expected Rosenthal to put in an appearance, he took a position somewhat remote from the one he had taken the day previous, but whence he could have an unobstructed view of the saloon entrance. He saw Rosenthal enter and waited in the hope he would come out, so that he could further track him. He hadn't long to wait until he observed Rosenthal come out, followed by three

others. They all jumped on a passing car that was going north, and were soon lost to sight.

Hill entered a restaurant that was close at hand and dined. It was then past noon, when leaving the restaurant and crossing the road, he went into the saloon which Rosenthal and his pals had left some time ago.

There was a cigar case just inside the entrance, and then folding doors. Inside the doors was the bar proper, where a number of men stood smoking and drinking. About midway up the bar, on the opposite side, were a number of compartments with closed doors, in which he could hear men and women's voices in lively conversation. At the end of the inclosed rooms there was a door leading into a passage. Hill ordered a glass of beer and a cigar, the waiter struck a match for him to light it. He then stood sipping his beer and smoking his cigar, seemingly oblivious of those in the place. He had been there but a short time, when a man accosted him with the announcement:

"All games upstairs."

"Thank you, but I haven't time today. I was just waiting for a party, but it seems as if they were not coming, so I will have to go."

"Was it a lady?"

"Yes," said Hill, smiling.

"Well you'd better wait. She'll probably turn up."

"No, thank you, I must be going," and he took his departure.

Opposite the saloon and gambling house there was a hotel of a shady character. On a sign on the doorjam it said, "Rooms to rent by day or week." Hill made application for a front room and was told he could have one on the second floor.

"Have you a lady?" inquired the woman who was acting as clerk.

Hill was nonplussed for a moment for a reply. At length he said, "I may have," looking at the woman, who promptly said,

"If you are going to stay for a week it will be so much," mentioning the sum, which was considerably augmented by the probable advent of a woman.

Hill paid the price, the clerk gave him the key, at the same time instructing a slatternly-looking girl to show the gentleman to his room, from the window of which he had a full view of the saloon on the opposite side of the street.

He left his room only as occasion required, to visit the bath room, or to get his meals. No cat ever more persistently watched a hole from which it expected a rodent to emerge than did Hill watch the saloon. He saw the people going and coming, the arrival of Ikey Rosenthal and his departure. He noticed about 9 in the evening there was a large influx of persons and the departure of many between the hours of 2 and 3 in the morning. Rosenthal seemed to be regular in his attendance, arriving about 9 p. m. and leaving, as a rule, shortly before the lights went out in the upper rooms, the bar being open all night and men and women entering and departing. In those he had no interest. His entire thoughts were focused on one individual and on him alone.

The ordinary street cars gave but little accommodation to those who were out late.

What was known as the owl cars did, and they ran but at stated periods during the night. Many of the saloon patrons who had far to go availed themselves of this accommodation, among others Isaac Rosenthal, who generally caught the car which passed the saloon about 2:30 a. m.



Coram Non Judice

Hill's week was up. He left the place during the afternoon, and, having no baggage, simply walked away. He went to a theatre in the evening, and when the show was over went to a restaurant and had a meal he sat long over. About 1:30 he left, and walked rapidly south in the direction he knew would lead him to the street where Ikey Rosenthal roomed. He took a position well up in the alley, but not too far to be out of hearing of whatever footsteps might come that way. In the still morning he could distinctly hear the horse car stop at the crossing to take passengers on or let them off. All the surroundings were as quiet as if the world slept—only when the street car went rumbling by. About a quarter to three he heard a car stop. He listened intently. A footstep sure! 'Twas he, the man he sought. He came jauntily along twisting his cane, a cigar in his mouth. He had reached the alley when a giant figure pounced on him. Grasping him by the throat in his fury, he lifted him from his feet and forced him toward the lamp-post. Rosenthal, in his throes, extended his hand to his hip pocket and in a final effort pulled his gun. His Nemesis, having forced him to the lamp-post, held him there with his left hand as if he was in a vise, and with his right he wrenched the gun from him, slipping it into his own coat pocket. His right hand now free, he placed them both around Rosenthal's throat until he saw life was fast fleeing from the wretch, though still conscious.

"The Lord hath delivered thee into my hands!" his executioner cried. "Martha Hill," he whispered to him, "you remember her! her who was afterward called Clementina Montague? You slaver, you die, you wretch, and may you be eternally damned!"

The form of the man that had been strangled was then too limp to stand. Hill had to press his body against the

lamp-post to keep it erect. Placing his hand in the breast pocket of his coat and extracting a rope, he wrapped it around the now dead man's throat, and securely tied him to the post. Taking the gun he had gotten from his victim he slipped it into his pocket. For a second he gazed on the face of the dead and then, spitting upon it, walked up the alley and was lost to sight.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MUGSY HAS A CLOSE CALL.

A laborer going to his work early one morning, with his dinner pail in his hand, was the first to encounter the body of Isaac Rosenthal. Struck dumb with fright, he dropped his can, and ran to the corner of the street where, recovering his speech, he shouted loudly:

“Police! Police!”

A couple of officers came running from different directions. The first one reaching him said:

“What’s up? Stop your bellowing.”

The workman grasped the first policeman by the arm just as the second arrived, and, being too excited to explain, led the officers to where the body of Rosenthal was tied to the lamp post. The policemen in turn were horrified at the ghastly sight, but immediately got busy. One ran to call up the patrol wagon, while the other remained with the corpse and the workman. When the wagon arrived the remains were loosened from the lamp post and dumped into the conveyance. On the arrival of the wagon at the Central, the body of the white slaver was taken in and laid on the squad room floor.

“Why, that’s Ikey Rosenthal!” said one of the officers present.

The body was recognized by others, as both he and his antecedents were well known to the police.

“Be jabers, he got what was coming to him!” remarked a son of the Emerald Isle in an undertone to the man who

patrolled the same beat with him. "He was a bad actor," he continued.

On the arrival of the chief, who had been notified by phone, he gave but a casual glance at the body, but, on being handed the rope by which the body was bound, he became immediately interested.

"Is Sergeant Morrissey here?" he inquired.

"No, sir, but he is due any moment."

"Tell him when he arrives I want to see him."

On the arrival of Morrissey, he had no sooner entered the office of the chief than that official handed him the piece of sash-cord by which the body of the man had been tied to the post.

"Ever see anything like that before?" inquired the chief, looking up at him.

"Yes, chief, that's the same kind of cord by which Sadie Blomgarten was strangled, probably part of the same bundle or roll."

"Then you've got a clew. The same man, whoever he is, committed both crimes."

"Yes, but you know, chief, Sadie committed suicide."

Both laughed, enjoying the joke.

"Well, while this fellow is no loss to society, I want you to get busy. We must do something for the reputation of the department."

Immediately a number of plain clothes men were sent out in pursuit of the murderer. The afternoon newspapers had display head lines, announcing "The Assassination of ISAAC ROSENTHAL, A WELL KNOWN SPORTING MAN, WITHIN A HUNDRED FEET OF HIS RESIDENCE.

Then followed a graphic description of how he was discovered by a laborer (giving his name) on going to his work in the early morn, how he was found, the method of

his undoing, a brief history of the man, partly correct and partly from the imaginations of the versatile reporters, who recognized the affair as furnishing a good story. There were pictures of the man from the photographs obtained from the woman who ran the rooming house in which he had boarded. All the photos, with one exception, showed Mr. Isaac Rosenthal as a very well-groomed, gentlemanly young fellow. Many a simple maid fell for one of them; as the enterprising Ike had stereotyped letters full of gush and requesting an exchange of photos with the innocents who would correspond with him. If to work her was easy, Ike would promise her a good situation, either as clerk or, if she was dramatically inclined, a position with a company that was just organizing; or any other old thing he thought she'd bite at. He never failed, however, to inform them that "he was a single young man in good circumstances, he was very much impressed with the nice picture she had sent him, and he hoped to soon have the exceeding pleasure of contemplating the original. With sincere regards, etc."

The exceptional picture was a scoop by one of the reporters, who obtained a picture of Ikey at the rogues' gallery when he was arrested as a youngster following the vulgar occupation of a common dip working the cars on Halsted street, between Madison and 12th streets.

The search for Rosenthal's assassin was pursued with vigor. Ike's associates were interviewed, who promised to give such assistance as they could and even a little money to the "cop" who'd catch the culprit. Many clews were hunted down, his going and coming for days before his taking off was laid bare, to find had he any quarrel with any one in particular or had any person been seen following him the night he left the gambling house, but all failed save one.

Mugsy had been known to threaten him, had ill-used

him on one occasion, and swore he would get even with him on another. This was after the famous Dent divorce case in which, no doubt, he had furnished evidence for the complainant. So the wise guys on the force resolved to make Mugsy the goat, their case against him being strengthened by the theory that, despite the coroner's verdict as to Sadie Blomgarten's suicide, she might have been murdered after all, and Mugsy was in the house at the time.

So Mugsy was pinched, held to the grand jury without bail, and indicted.

Ike's friends were bitter against Mugsy, and prepared to swear a hole through a brick wall to convict him.

It was shown that, after the death of his old mistress, he had led a precarious life, his woman having to support him by her earnings on the street. The night preceding the murder she was as full of booze as an egg was full of meat. She swore point blank that she and her man Mugsy went to their room about one in the morning, and stayed there all night, but on being given a grueling at police headquarters she broke down completely and had to admit that she was so piped that she didn't know where she was. It looked bad for Mugsy—a strong circumstantial case having been made against him. His old friend, Dent, ultimately came to his rescue. He felt assured of Mugsy's innocence. It didn't make any difference with him whether or not his hatred for Rosenthal was intense, as he was advised by his attorneys in the divorce case that it was Rosenthal that furnished the most damaging evidence against him. He also figured as a practical man of affairs. It was no slouch who had done this job, but a man or men who had laid their plans to a nicety, of which Mugsy was incapable. So Dent put his agents to work who, in time, furnished a reasonable alibi, not unsatisfactory to the then state's attorney, who, when

the case came up for final hearing, entered a plea of "nolle prosequi," to the surprise of Ike's friends and mourners, and the relief of Mugsy, who was discharged.

The chief of police and some of his subordinates, after their case against Mugsy had collapsed, held a conference at which they permitted some of the newspaper reporters to be present. When they were assembled, he said:

"Gentlemen, I must admit we are completely baffled in this case. I thought we had the right fellow and as it is I am far from satisfied, but the state thought differently, so that is an end of it."

"Why don't you trace some of Rosenthal's enemies?" spoke up one of the young reporters. "Some person he has wronged?"

"Young man," replied the chief, looking at him, "they're too numerous and spread too widely apart. You know the line of business he was in."

"Yes, I have heard of it."

"Well, then, if we would undertake to hunt up ten per cent of them, my men couldn't do it in a year, nor would our appropriation be able to meet the expense. So the case is dropped. My own opinion is some dangerous lunatic through some wrong or fancied wrong is at large, and committed that and another crime which I don't care to mention, but with which you are all familiar. And we will be fortunate if we don't hear of some more of his doings. So all I can do now is to have my men on the alert. Take a cigar, boys, and forget it for the time."

The newsies gave a synopsis of the interview, laying stress on the chief's opinion of the dangerous lunatic that was abroad, which frightened many nervous people, until other events arose which eliminated Rosenthal et. al. from their minds.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PEACE REIGNS IN B—.

Rachel Howard had an opportunity to glance over the morning papers while awaiting her brother Matt to come to his breakfast. Whenever an item of special interest came to her notice, she, as a rule, called Matt's attention to it as a part of their morning gossip. Having noticed the newspaper account of the killing of Rosenthal, he had no sooner taken his seat than she said:

"Matt, there's been another horrible murder in Chicago."

"That's no news," he said, proceeding with his breakfast. "There's a murder in Chicago every day and some times two." He was nearly through with his morning meal, when he picked up the paper. At the first glance he saw the headlines referring to the murder of Rosenthal, and he could hardly disguise his agitation. As a law-abiding citizen it was somewhat repellant to him, and he thought seriously over the matter. Addressing his sister, he said:

"Rachel, isn't it strange that Robert never wrote while he has been away, now over two weeks? I wonder if he wrote to his people."

"No, I was there last night, and his mother was complaining of his neglect."

Howard began to study, his mind reverting to the killing of Sadie Blomgarten. The coroner's verdict had set his mind at rest on that question. He believed Robert Hill was in no way implicated in it, and he felt relieved, but

now the Rosenthal case revived his suspicions. He remembered Hill's oath to be revenged for the frightful wrong which had been done his sister and like a flash it came to his mind that on the occasion of his going to Robert's house to inquire why he had abstained from visiting them, he noticed Robert in the little workshop in the act of adjusting a noose on a piece of sash cord, and he remembered Robert's haste in placing it in a drawer when he came in upon him unawares. So he arrived at the conclusion that his old comrade was the perpetrator of both those crimes.

A tear welled up in his eyes as he thought of his dead sweetheart lying cold in her grave, and of those two beings done to death as the authors of her misfortune, and his broken heart. He looked across the table at his sister, young and virtuous, and his heart was steeled.

"By God!" he said to himself, "if such had happened Rachel I would have acted as Robert has done if I had the courage and determination that he has. He has but meted out a fitting punishment to the monsters."

"I am very anxious to hear from Robert," he said aloud, as he left the table abruptly, without any comment on what he read in the paper, a subject on which Rachel expected him to dwell as part of their table talk.

Matthew Howard spent forty-eight anxious hours in waiting to hear from his friend. He was afraid something ill might have befallen him. On the third day, in sorting his mail, he observed a letter from New York. He knew the handwriting on the envelope and hastily ripped it open—it was from his boyhood companion, and read as follows:

"New York, ————.

Mr. Matthew Howard.

Friend Matt:—I suppose you'll never forgive me for

not writing to you before this. The facts are, I haven't had time to write, I have been so busy visiting the wonders in this great metropolis. I am trying to see every thing worth seeing: the docks with all their shipping, the great trans-Atlantic vessels, so different to those your parents and mine came over in, Castle Garden, where my parents first put foot on our shores. I don't know whether yours came through there or not, it's a very busy place, and I was very much interested in the sights I saw there. New York has magnificent buildings, churches and theatres. And as for Coney Island, that's a summer resort worth coming all the way from our town to see; but, when I get home, I will tell you all about it. I am having a splendid time, and never felt better. Give my love to Rachel and all the members of the family, not forgetting yourself.

Your old friend and boyhood companion,

Robert Hill."

He had no sooner read the letter than he left all other correspondence unopened, and went to the dining room, where he knew his breakfast was waiting. Taking his seat, Rachel began to pour out the coffee.

"I have got a letter from Bob at last," he said, addressing his sister.

"Where is he?" she inquired anxiously. "Does he say when he is coming home?"

"He's in New York. I'll read you his letter."

She listened attentively, a smile of gladness illumining her face as he proceeded. When he came to that part "Give my love to Rachel" he paused, and, glancing at his sister, a blush came over her face. "And all the members of the family," he continued.

Of those she had no jealousy. That latter part was

merely formal, but "Give my love to Rachel" made her heart beat faster.

"He don't say when he's coming back?" remarked Rachel.

"He won't be long now," remarked her brother. "I am glad Bob is having so good a time."

When Matt got back to his office he picked up the envelope and, comparing the time on the letter head with the date of its mailing in New York, saw a discrepancy of two days. "I didn't think it was in Bob," he communed within himself.

Two days following the first letter from Hill, Matt Howard found another in his mail. It was addressed to Rachel Howard. When he handed it to her he noticed the eagerness with which she received it. She was about to place it in her pocket, so as to enjoy reading it in the privacy of her own room.

"Read it," said Matt, smiling at her.

Her face flushed. She thought there might be some tender sentiment in it exclusively for herself. She opened the letter and commenced to read, intending to skip any part too sacred to be shared in by any than herself. It read:

"Boston, ————.

Miss Rachel Howard.

My Dear Rachel:—I presume, before you receive this, Matt has informed you where I was and how I was passing my time. Well, I did New York to a finish, saw and took in everything I thought worth seeing, and took a trip by boat to Boston, a delightful journey. This old quaint city differs much from the more modern communities; its crooked, narrow streets and ancient buildings. It has, however, hallowed memories and landmarks that every Ameri-

can should revere. As we are taught, it was the Cradle of Liberty, 'twas here the colonists were most aggressive against British tyranny. 'Twas here the Battle of Bunker Hill was fought. 'Twas here the patriots had their monster tea party when they threw hundreds of chests of tea into the bay before they would pay the tax on it. They were men in those days, with the courage and determination to oppose a wrong even at the risk of their lives. All honor to them. But I will have to defer further, until I have the opportunity to recount all my experiences since I left our good town of B——. And I will conclude by telling you I am beginning to get homesickness, and long to be back again with you and all those I love. I will leave here in a couple of days for Chicago, where I have to make arrangements for the shipping of the tombstone to be placed over Martha's grave, as I have been notified it has been ready for some time and they are waiting my instructions to ship it. Will write from Chicago what day you may expect me home.

Your devoted friend,

Robert Hill."

At the conclusion of the reading of the letter Matt looked at his sister and smiled.

"A very business-like letter, Sis, not the kind of one you expected." She blushed. He had hit the mark. She was glad to hear from Robert whom as a man she loved and as a boy she and Martha had pegged with tufts of grass and stones in the pool where he and her brother were bathing, so as to irritate them.

Four days later, another letter arrived. It was brief, and addressed to Matthew Howard:

"Chicago, ——.

Friend Matt:—Will leave for home by the noon train

tomorrow. Have had stone crated and forwarded by freight. I hope you will like it when you see it. It is massive, and the wording on it, the sentiment, the arrangement and style of letters please me very much. I am well satisfied with it and believe you and Rachel will approve of it when you see it.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Hill."

After Matt had read the letter to his sister, he said:

"Now, Rachel, as I am going to meet Bob tomorrow and bring him here, if he is willing to come, I want you to prepare a nice lunch. Probably he has been so busy in Chicago the last couple of days he hasn't had time to eat."

Rachel would have liked to have been the first to meet him and welcome him home, but her modesty would not permit, besides she had to prepare the lunch. She sincerely hoped Bob would come to their place first, though she had her misgivings. She knew what a devoted son he was, and that his parents had the first claim upon him.

There was quite a group at the depot when the train on which Robert Hill was expected came steaming into the railway station at B—.

Matt Howard and Mr. Robinson, manager of the mill, had been talking together, when they heard a shout: "Here he is!" and the crowd surged toward the car where Robert Hill was standing on the steps.

Matt Howard was the first to greet him, having a prior claim.

"How are you, Bob?" as they grasped hands.

"As good as a certified check of yours on our bank," nodding to the cashier who, he noticed, was present, and who came forward to shake hands with him, as did Mr. Robinson and a number present.

"Hello, there's mother!" he said, as the old lady was making her way to embrace her son. When they met he lifted her off her feet, and hugged and kissed her until tears of joy welled up in her eyes.

"How's pa?" he asked.

"He is fairly well, and wanted to come and meet you, but I wouldn't let him. You know he has a difficulty in walking."

"That's right, mother. You always took good care of him." The old lady smiled at the compliment.

"I want you to come over to my house," remarked Howard. "Rachel has prepared a little lunch."

Hill looked at his mother. "What say you, mother? Will you excuse me for about an hour?"

"Yes, you can go, but don't stay long—your father is anxious to see you."

"Then you excuse me to him and you can tell him that I am O. K. and considerably improved since he saw me last."

Rachel Howard stood at the door waiting the coming of a welcome guest. When Hill reached her he extended his hand.

"Well, Rachel," he said, "how are you?" Her face lit up with pleasure as she extended her hand to the big, brawny man, who looked the picture of health and vigor.

"Very well, Mr. Hill."

"What! have you forgotten my name already? I used to be Bob in the old days."

"Yes, or Robert," she said, flushing, "but now you are a big man."

"Yes, Rachel, and you're a young lady. Hence the reserve."

She led the way to the dining room, where a substantial spread awaited their guest.

"This seems to be made to measure," remarked Bob, looking over the well-supplied table. "Who's the cook?"

"I am," Rachel blurted out without a thought.

"Then you deserve a diploma," he said, smiling at her.

She colored up, and her brother Matt laughed at her discomfiture.

During the meal the two men chatted freely, Matt about happenings in B—— while Hill was away, and Hill in turn gave some of his experiences during his travels. Rachel, an interested listener, was seemingly absorbed in Hill's narrative.

At the parting Hill held Rachel's hand in his while he looked into her eyes. She gazed at him in admiration. Bob would have liked to kiss her, but Matt stood in the way. So he refrained.

At the Hill homestead there was a general jollification. The proverbial fatted calf had been killed, but not for a wayward son. Mr. Robinson and other neighbors came in to shake hands with the illustrious traveler and pass a few complimentary remarks, welcoming him home. Bob Hill's spirit was jubilant. He joked with the girls, and thanked the men for their kindly expressions. Father and mother had little to say. They feasted their eyes on their stalwart son and hung on every word he said till late in the evening.

The following morning Hill was the first man at the mill. He inspected the machinery and found every thing in working order, tapped his brother Bill on the shoulder and complimented him on his excellent management. Mr. Robinson came in and his first expression was to inquire what Bob was doing around there today.

"I was just looking over things to see if everything was all right."

"Never better," remarked Robinson, cheerfully. "You

will have to look to your laurels, or Bill will get away with them," smiling at Bob's younger brother, who stood demurely aside.

Bob smiled his approval of his brother's ability.

"I'll want the use of a dray today," said Hill, addressing Mr. Robinson. "The tombstone I have had made to put on our lot will be in this afternoon."

"Help yourself, Bob," was Robinson's answer. "You know what you need."

"I have the dimensions for the foundation, and I will have to get the masons to work, so I'll leave you for the present."

"Can I be of any service to you?" inquired Robinson, as he was leaving.

"You can come around when we are getting it on the truck and give your advice."

Robert Hill soon had willing workers, and the foundation was laid in accordance with his instructions.

The massive stone lay on a flat car in the freight depot. It was covered with strong canvas and a wooden casing so as to prevent it from being chipped in transit. The strongest truck belonging to the mill, with four powerful perchurons, were there to haul it. A number of the friends and neighbors were interested lookers on, among them Matt Howard and Mr. Robinson. Hill himself superintended the transfer from the flat car to the truck. He saw that it was first carefully jacked up, then sturdy beams put under it, on which rollers were placed. Robert then had strong ropes attached to the massive stone and hitched around a convenient post, so that it could not possibly get away from them while running down the incline between the flat car and the truck. When all was arranged to his satisfaction he seized a jack and, mounting the car in which it stood,

looked back at Mr. Robinson, who had the rope hitched around the post.

"Now look out, Mr. Robinson," he said, and, giving the jack a few turns so as to give the massive stone a start, it slid down gently on the rollers while Mr. Robinson slackened the rope.

"Well done, Bob!" exclaimed his crowd of admirers, when they saw the ponderous mass of granite planted evenly and firmly on the two pieces of lumber which rested on the truck, elevating the tombstone so as to permit ropes to be placed under it while being lifted to the foundation prepared to receive it.

On a start being made for the graveyard the crowd followed, increasing as they went along, Rachel Howard among them. Robert Hill, seeing her, went toward her, and walked by her side. Arriving at the graveyard, there was a considerable group there in advance, among them Hill's father and mother and most of the members of the Hill and Howard families.

The horses hauling the load went gallantly along till they reached the graveyard. When they struck a soft place on the sod, one of the hind wheels of the truck sank in the soft earth and the horses were unable to move it. The driver plied his whip, and shouted to his horses, but it was of no avail. Mr. Robinson took the whip from the driver to flog the horses into making a further effort.

"Excuse me, Rachel," said Hill, leaving her side.

"Wait a moment," signaling to the driver, who was still shouting to his horses to gid up. "Bring me some of those planks," addressing the onlookers, pointing to a pile of lumber that was some little distance away. On the planks being brought, he placed some of them in position to rest a jack on and lift the sunken end of the truck. This done,

he placed a stout plank for the wheel to run on and gave the signal to the driver to go ahead. The driver shouted to his horses, which started off at a run.

“Keep them going!” roared Bob, who ran behind the truck. No further mishap occurred on the way to Martha’s grave, where shear legs were all ready in position to lift the stone from the truck to the foundation ready to receive it.

The mason stood by to see to the proper placing and squaring of the stone. In a brief time the ropes were attached, the stone hoisted and swung until it was over its resting place. The mason gave orders to lower it slowly, he steadying and guiding it into place. After making some little alteration in the leveling, he gave the signal to lower, and the monument placed to the memory of Martha Hill rested firmly on its bed.

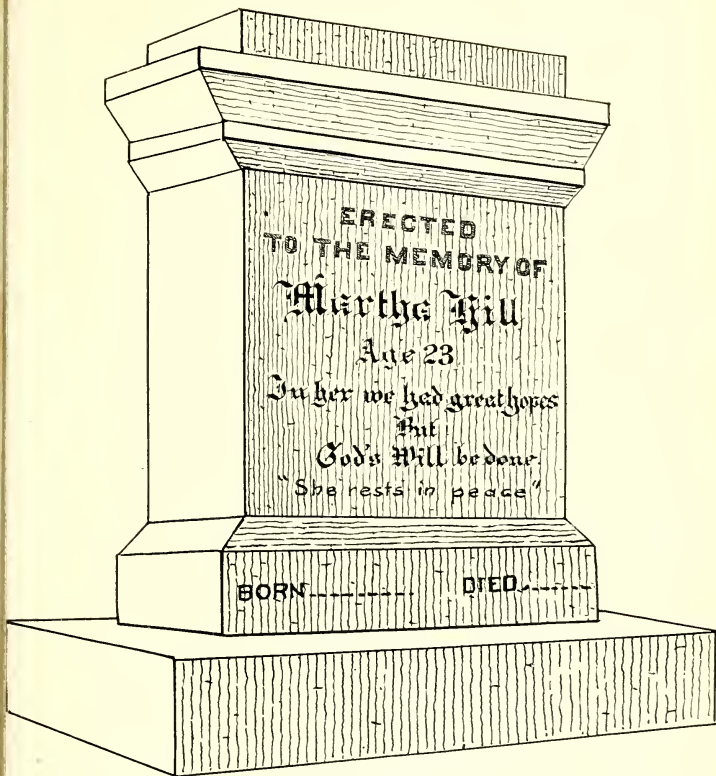
The mason with his hammer broke off the lumber placed to protect the corners and nothing but the canvas cover remained. It was so attached that the pulling of a string would loosen it so as to fall below the base.

Robert Hill was seen escorting Rachel Howard to where the string was attached. He stood by while she pulled the cord, the canvas fell as arranged, and the magnificent tombstone was in plain view.

A buzz of approval could be heard. “It’s magnificent!” said some; “Splendid!” said others as they surged forward to read the inscription. “She was well worthy of it,” said the Rev. Mr. Peterson, who was an interested spectator.

It was a beautiful summer’s day. The sun shone refulgent in the heavens. All nature seemed to have been interested in making the day and the surroundings pleasant and harmonious.

The birds in the trees warbled as if in jubilation.



IN MEMORIAM

The flowers on the graves were in full bloom, but no grave in all the cemetery had so rare, so profuse, or so beautiful a display as that which adorned the resting place of Martha Hill.

It took long for the crowd to disperse, as all were eager to read the inscription on the stone.

Rachel Howard went and sat on an adjacent tomb. Woman-like she had to shed a few tears. At length none remained but she and Robert. Many, knowing the friendship between them, retired out of respect, until at length they were alone. Hill, seeing her seated, went and sat beside her.

“What do you think of it, Rachel?” he inquired.

“It’s beautiful,” she answered, placing her handkerchief to her eyes.

“I am satisfied,” he said. “There is now only one thing on earth I crave for.”

“What is that, Robert?”

“Yourself.”

She placed her arm around his neck, he drew her toward him and, in an ardent embrace, fervently kissed her more than willing lips.

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